

The Imperial Image at the End of Exile

The Byzantine Embroidered Silk in Genoa and the Treaty of Nymphaion (1261)

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Byzantine textiles, high grades of silk in particular, are widely acknowledged to have been an important component of diplomacy throughout the medieval Mediterranean. Silk offered the maximum advantage for long-distance diplomacy: it was easily transported—lightweight and flexible—and bore maximum economic value, sometimes equivalent to specie. A variety of textual sources portray a tightly controlled silk industry where the circulation of silk was a prerogative of the emperor, in theory at least: Liudprand of Cremona speaks of sumptuous silk confiscated upon his departure from Constantinople, and the *Book of the Eparch* describes harsh punishments for silk workers who strayed beyond the prescribed confines of the imperial city's guild system.¹ With such

✦ In addition to Margaret Mullett and the anonymous readers for *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, I would like to thank Robert Nelson, Jonathan Sachs, and Nancy Ševčenko for reading earlier drafts of the piece and for serving as supportive interlocutors. My thoughts on the silk in Genoa have benefited from conversations with many colleagues over the years. Particular thanks are due to Sarah Brooks, Annemarie Weyl Carr, Helen Evans, Anthony Kaldellis, Kathleen Maxwell, Linda Seidel, Alice-Mary Talbot, Galina Tirnanic, Warren Woodfin, and Ann Marie Yasin. I would also like to express my gratitude to Loredana Pessa and Piero Boccardo for generously allowing me access to the textile in Genoa and for granting publication permission. Research for this article was supported by the American Philosophical Society and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

¹ Scholarship on Byzantine silk is vast. On silk production and economics, see R. S. Lopez, "Silk Industry in the Byzantine Empire," *Speculum* 20, no. 1 (1945): 1–42, repr. in *Byzantium and the World around It: Economic and Institutional Relations* (London, 1978), article III; A. Muthesius, "The Byzantine Silk Industry: Lopez and Beyond," *JMedHist* 19 (1993): 1–67, repr. in *Studies in Byzantine and Islamic Silk Weaving* (London, 1995), 255–314; N. Oikonomides, "Silk Trade and Production in Byzantium from the Sixth to the Ninth Century: The Seals of the Kommerkiarioi," *DOP* 40 (1986): 33–53, repr. in *Social and Economic Life in Byzantium* (Aldershot–Burlington, 2004), article VIII; G. C. Maniatis, "Organization, Market Structure, and Modus Operandi of the Private Silk Industry in Tenth-Century Byzantium," *DOP* 53 (1999): 263–332, as well as numerous studies by David Jacoby, including "Silk in Western Byzantium before the Fourth Crusade," *BZ* 84–85 (1991–92): 452–500, repr. in *Trade, Commodities and Shipping in the Medieval Mediterranean* (Aldershot–Brookfield, 1997), article VII; "Silk Crosses the Mediterranean," in *Le vie del Mediterraneo: Idee, uomini, oggetti (secoli XI–XVI)*, ed. G. Airaldi (Genoa, 1997), 35–79, repr. in *Byzantium, Latin Romania and the Mediterranean* (Aldershot–Burlington, 2001), article X; "The Silk Trade of Late Byzantine Constantinople," in *Istanbul Üniversitesi 550. Yıl, Uluslararası Bizans Ve Osmanlı Sempozyumu (XV. Yüzyıl): 30–31 Mayıs 2003*, ed. S. Atasoy (Istanbul, 2004), 130–44; and "Late Byzantium between the Mediterranean and Asia: Trade and Material Culture," in *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1537): Perspectives on Late Byzantine Art and Culture*, ed. S. T. Brooks (New York–New Haven, 2006), 20–41. Particularly attentive to the role of Genoa in Mediterranean textile trade is D. Jacoby, "Genoa, Silk Trade and Silk Manufacture in the Mediterranean Region (ca. 1100–1300)," in *Tessuti,oreficerie, miniature in Liguria, XIII–XV secolo*, ed. A. R. Calderoni Masetti, C. Di Fabio, M. Marcenaro (Bordighera, 1999), 11–40, repr. in *Commercial Exchange Across*

restricted circulation of the highest grades, the repute of Byzantine silk soared. This is underscored by the fact that many of the surviving fragments are preserved in western European shrines, having been reused to wrap the relics of saints.² For the majority of this corpus of tantalizingly ambiguous and anonymous silks—representing riders, hunters, elephant tamers, as well as rulers—it is unclear whether they were originally gifted, traded, bought, or stolen. The movement of silk, even when its precise modes and trajectories are not fully understood, is central to its value: plunder, conflict, and diplomacy invariably involved silk.³

the Mediterranean: Byzantium, the Crusader Levant, Egypt and Italy (Aldershot–Burlington, 2005), article XI. On silk and diplomacy see J. Shepard, “Silks, Skills and Opportunities in Byzantium: Some Reflexions,” *BMGS* 21 (1997): 246–57; A. Muthesius, “Silken Diplomacy,” in *Byzantine Diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, ed. J. Shepard and S. Franklin (Aldershot–Brookfield, 1992), 237–48; and F. E. Schlosser, “Weaving a Precious Web: The Use of Textiles in Diplomacy,” *BSL* 63 (2005): 45–52. On the guild system and the *Book of the Eparch*, see G. C. Maniatis, “The Guild System in Byzantium and Medieval Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis of Organizational Structures, Regulatory Mechanisms and Behavioral Patterns,” *Byzantion* 76 (2006): 516–59. On silk and cultural exchange more broadly, see D. Jacoby, “Silk Economics and Cross-Cultural Artistic Interaction: Byzantium, the Muslim World, and the Christian West,” *DOP* 58 (2004): 197–240, and L. Brubaker, “The Elephant and the Ark: Cultural and Material Interchange across the Mediterranean in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries,” *DOP* 58 (2004): 175–95, esp. 189–94. Both works were part of the 2002 Dumbarton Oaks Symposium, “Realities of the Arts of the Medieval Mediterranean, 800–1500.”

2 Surviving Byzantine silks have been studied most extensively by Anna Muthesius, although her work is concerned primarily with pre-Latin-conquest textiles. See *Studies in Byzantine and Islamic Silk Weaving* (London, 1995); *Byzantine Silk Weaving, AD 400–AD 1200* (Vienna, 1997); “A Practical Approach to the History of Byzantine Silk Weaving,” *JÖB* 34 (1984): 235–54; and “Essential Processes, Looms, and Technical Aspects of the Production of Silk Textiles,” in *EHB*, 1:147–68. W. Woodfin, “Presents Given and Presence Subverted: The Cunegunda *Chormantel* in Bamberg and the Ideology of Byzantine Textiles,” *Gesta* 47, no. 1 (2008): 33–49, has considered carefully one textile and its afterlife in Western Europe. For later textiles and Palaiologan embroidery see G. Millet, *Broderies religieuses de style byzantin*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1939–41); P. Johnstone, *The Byzantine Tradition in Church Embroidery* (Chicago, 1967); and W. Woodfin, “Late Byzantine Liturgical Vestments,” in *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)*, ed. H. C. Evans (New York–New Haven, 2004), 295–99.

3 This is to suggest neither that all silk was intended for foreign travel nor that silk production existed outside the realm of economics (that silk was neither bought nor sold) but rather that

The combination of portability, cultural prestige, and high monetary value guaranteed silk’s inclusion alongside specie in a tenth-century imperial packing list for military expeditions to be used for diplomacy on the road.⁴ Yet few extant pieces can be contextualized within particular diplomatic negotiations. One significant exception is the thirteenth-century embroidered silk in the collection of Genoa’s Museo di Sant’Agostino, the subject of the present study, which is extraordinary in its pictorial content, historic circumstance, and state of preservation (fig. 1).⁵ Until the

portability and mobility were integral to its value. On portability as a category for minor arts, including silk, see E. Hoffman, “Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian Interchange from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century,” *Art History* 24, no. 1 (2001): 17–50.

4 The packing list includes in the imperial *vestiarion*’s load the imperial regalia, clothing, and items of imperial ceremonial (vessels, swords, perfumes, textiles, etc.); books (liturgical, strategic and prognostic manuals, and histories); and miscellaneous medical substances. In addition to these items, the text specifies that both textiles and specie were brought along for distribution. Tailored and untailored cloths of varying degrees of quality and with an abundance of decorative features—from stripes to eagles, imperial symbols, and hornets—and with precisely specified monetary values were to be brought along to be dispatched to distinguished powerful foreigners (διὰ τὸ εἰς εὐγενεῖς καὶ μεγάλους ἐθνικοὺς ἀποστέλλεσθαι). Specie is specified both for the military expedition’s expenses and for largesse for foreigners on campaign. See J. F. Haldon, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus: Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions* (Vienna, 1990), 108–11. The distribution of similar silks is described later in the treatise as well (126–27). Diplomatic treaties often stipulate the transfer of both specie and silk. While the very format and media of each lend them to exchange, specie is adaptable to both small-scale transaction and large-scale diplomatic conveyances, whereas silk is more suitable for large-scale diplomacy alone. It is not liquid or convertible, nor divisible into different denominations. The fragment of a late tenth-century silk with an unnamed emperor from one of the tombs in Bamberg Cathedral, for example, surely arrived in Germanic lands not through mercantile channels but rather through some kind of diplomatic negotiations. Not only is it monumental in scale—the original diameter of the medallion would have exceeded 68 cm—but the imagery is decidedly imperial, with the nimbate-crowned Byzantine emperor astride his mount hailing the viewer triumphantly. See *Rom und Byzanz: Schatzkammerstücke aus bayerischen Sammlungen* (Munich, 1998), 213–14. On imperial rider imagery, see A. Grabar, *L’empereur dans l’art byzantin* (1936; repr. London, 1971), 45–54.

5 Since 1950 the textile has been part of the collection of the Palazzo Bianco with G. P. B. 2073 as its accession number. At the time of this article’s composition it had been deinstalled from the Palazzo Bianco gallery and was awaiting transfer to Florence to undergo an extensive conservation program. Upon its return to Genoa, it will be installed in the Museo di Sant’Agostino. Following

seventeenth century this silk was held in the treasury of San Lorenzo, Genoa's cathedral, which is represented at the center of the textile. Measuring approximately one and one-quarter by three and three-quarter meters (1.28 × 3.74 meters), the large, well-preserved purple embroidery depicts in two ten-scene registers the life of Saint Lawrence and associated martyrs and includes an image of the Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos with the archangel Michael and Saint Lawrence. Although it adheres mainly to Byzantine embroidery customs and depicts a Palaiologan emperor at its center, its intended destination, Genoa,

is equally prominent: the inscriptions are Latin rather than Greek, and the subject matter, the life of Saint Lawrence, corresponds to its destination, the cathedral of San Lorenzo in Genoa.

In the introduction to the acts of the Twenty-fourth International Congress of the History of Art, held in Bologna in 1979, Hans Belting introduced this silk in Genoa as a point of departure for the reconsideration of eastern and western artistic categories. Using the term *lingua franca*, he described a class of objects that resist East-West categorization as "un art ni occidental ni byzantin, mais qui développa un nouveau langage, synthétique, aux composantes difficilement distinguable."⁶ Belting's mention of the silk within this context has been invoked in nearly all art historical studies of the textile.⁷ Extending Belting's hypothesis, recent scholars have identified a range of possible iconographic, stylistic, and hagiographic sources for the textile, and in the process have supported Belting's contention that it is in fact composed of elements drawn from both eastern and western traditions.

Although it exhibits both western and eastern pictorial traditions, the tenor of the silk remains decidedly Byzantine. It is the product of Byzantium first and foremost, but one that is tailored for its Genoese audience and its function as a diplomatic gift. In other words, by referring to both its sender and recipient, the design of the silk is governed by its status as a diplomatic gift and the diplomatic occasion for which it was created. Following an overview of the political context

a series of nineteenth-century historical studies, the Byzantine "pallio," as it has come to be known in the scholarship, has been the subject of a handful of dedicated art historical essays: P. Johnstone, "The Byzantine 'Pallio' in the Palazzo Bianco at Genoa," *GBA* 87 (1976): 99–108; E. Parma Armani, "Nuove indagini sul 'Pallio' bizantino duecentesco di San Lorenzo in Palazzo Bianco a Genova," *Studi di storia delle arte* 5 (1983–85): 31–47; C. Falcone, "Il 'Pallio' bizantino di San Lorenzo a Genova: Una riconsiderazione," *Arte cristiana* 84 (1996): 337–52; A. R. Calderoni Masetti, "Considerazioni finali, con una noterella minima sul Pallio di 'San Lorenzo,'" in Calderoni Masetti et al., *Tessuti oreficerie* (n. 1 above), 403–11; and A. Paribeni, "Il pallio di San Lorenzo a Genova," in *L'arte di Bisanzio e l'Italia al tempo dei Paleologi 1261–1453* [*Milion* 5], ed. A. Iacobini and M. Della Valle (Rome, 1999), 229–52. Considering the close proximity of publication dates of the most recent three articles, one might expect a critical debate among Falcone, Calderoni Masetti, and Paribeni. Close examination, however, proves this not to be the case. While Calderoni Masetti took into consideration Falcone's piece, neither work appeared in time to be considered by Paribeni. See also X. A. Siderides, "Ὁ ἐν Γενούῃ Βυζαντινὸς πέπλος," *ΕΕΒΣ* 5 (1928): 376–78; P. Schreiner, "Zwei Denkmäler aus der frühen Paläologenzeit: Ein Bildnis Michels VIII. und der Genueser Pallio," in *Festschrift für Klaus Wessel zum 70. Geburtstag: In memoriam*, ed. M. Restle (Munich, 1988), 249–57, and C. J. Hilsdale, "Diplomacy by Design: Rhetorical Strategies of the Byzantine Gift" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2003), 132–74 (out of which the present study grows). The textile is also mentioned in R. Naumann and H. Belting, *Die Euphemia-Kirche am Hippodrom zu Istanbul und ihre Fresken* (Berlin, 1966), 150–51; A. Cutler and J. W. Nesbitt, *L'arte Bizantina e il suo pubblico* (Torino, 1986), 318; E. Papone, ed., "Galleria di Palazzo Bianco," in *Il passato presente—I Musei del Comune di Genova* (Genoa, 1991), 66; L. Tagliaferro, ed., *La Galleria di Palazzo Bianco Genova, guida pratiche* (Genoa, 1992), 14–15; C. Di Fabio, *La Cattedrale di Genova nel Medioevo, secoli VI–XIV* (Milan–Genoa, 1998), 201–2; Evans, *Byzantium: Faith and Power* (n. 2 above), 14; and C. Di Fabio, "Bisanzio a Genova fra XII e XIV secolo: Documenti e memorie d'arte," in *Genova e l'Europa mediterranea: Opere, artisti, committenti, collezionisti*, ed. P. Boccardo and C. Di Fabio (Genoa, 2005), 41–67.

6 H. Belting, ed., *Il Medio Oriente e l'Occidente nell'arte del XIII secolo (Atti del XXIV Congresso internazionale di storia dell'arte 2, Bologna 1979)* (Bologna, 1982), 3. The same issue of canonicity holds true for a number of thirteenth-century works of art, including the Italo-Byzantine icon in the Museo Nazionale di San Matteo in Pisa, the style of which, in Annemarie Weyl Carr's insightful words, in Evans, *Byzantium: Faith and Power*, 496–97, "drew the attention of early scholars, but its Italianate inflection, which makes it too Italian for Byzantinists, while remaining too Byzantine for Italianists, has caused the icon to receive little recent attention."

7 The four most recent dedicated art historical studies of the textile refer to Belting's passage: Parma Armani, "Nuove indagini," 38; Falcone, "Il 'Pallio' bizantino," 350 n. 56; Calderoni Masetti, "Considerazioni finali," 407; and Paribeni, "Il pallio di San Lorenzo," 246 n. 54 (all n. 5 above). Paribeni and Falcone have studied the textile's style and possible eastern and western source material most closely.



surrounding the textile's creation, this article first considers its main contemporary textual source, Manuel Holobolos's encomium to Michael VIII Palaiologos, then turns to the imagery of the embroidered silk itself. An examination of the intersection of hagiographic and imperial imagery clarifies the implications of the silk's creation and extension as a diplomatic gift in conjunction with the Byzantine restoration of Constantinople in 1261. Hinging on a number of rivalries, including political rivalries among Byzantine Greek successor states and commercial rivalries among Italian maritime republics, this study ultimately argues that the imagery of the textile constitutes a visual encomium to Michael VIII similar in many ways to the surviving imperial oration in which it is described, but one intended for a foreign and strategically significant audience. The end result is an image of imperial largesse particular to the emperor's diplomatic agenda on the eve of the end of exile.

The End of Exile: The Treaty of Nymphaion and the Byzantine Restoration of Constantinople (1261)

The embroidered silk now in Genoa is associated with the 1261 Treaty of Nymphaion, the Genoese-Byzantine alliance forged with the intention of reconquering Constantinople from the Latins who had occupied the coveted imperial capital since 1204. With the Fourth Crusade and the establishment of the Latin Empire of Constantinople, the Venetians gained a decided commercial advantage over the Genoese, who were forced to cultivate alternate maritime enterprises, and the Byzantines were expelled from their imperial city and forced to regroup in exile. Although the restoration of Constantinople to Byzantine rule was accomplished in 1261, the city's successful reclamation did not depend fully on the Genoese assistance that was stipulated in the treaty. The relationship of the treaty



FIG. 1
Embroidered silk
of Saint Lawrence,
associated saints,
and Michael VIII
Palaiologos, 1261,
Genova, Civiche
Collezioni, Museo
di Sant'Agostino
(photo: author)

to the primary event it concerned, therefore, is an odd one: with hindsight, it appears that the Byzantine restoration of the imperial city was attained almost by accident, regardless of the treaty.⁸ The garrison and fleet had left Constantinople defenseless and Michael Palaiologos's general Alexios Strategopoulos entered the city without violence, causing the Latin rulers to flee. Yet the stakes of the treaty should not be underestimated. Through this pact the Genoese entered into alliance with the schismatic Greeks against the Latins in Constantinople, an act that put them at risk of excommunication,⁹ and the Byzantine empire in

Nicaea, struggling for legitimization, received long-distance allies to support its ambitions. In this sense, we should read the treaty as the culmination of two major rivalries: the long-held commercial rivalry between the Italian maritime powers of Genoa and Venice, and at the same time the political rivalry between the Empire of Nicaea and the other Byzantine claimants in exile.

The 1204 conquest and occupation of Constantinople revealed the fragility of the Byzantine imperial office, and called into question the limits of imperial authority and ideology. In its aftermath, a struggle for organized Byzantine resistance to Latin rule was divided among Nicaea in western Asia Minor, Epiros in Greece, and Trebizond on the southeast corner of the Black Sea. To consolidate the legacy of Byzantine imperium, each of these three successor states claimed

8 The details of the treaty are discussed at greater length below.

9 D. J. Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West, 1258–1282: A Study in Byzantine-Latin Relations* (Cambridge, 1959), 83–84; P. Schreiner, "Bisanzio e Genova: Tentativo di un'analisi delle relazioni politiche, commerciali, e culturali," in *Studia Byzantino-Bulgarica* (Vienna, 1986), 2:135–36. S. A. Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese, 958–1528* (Chapel Hill, 1996), 150, describes the treaty as "an astute gamble" by the Genoese which put them at risk of not only

excommunication by the pope but also revenge by the Venetians. Thus the treaty, according to Epstein, "combined business, pleasure from evening the score with Venice, and risk."

its own emperor of the Romans, and each had its eye on the recovery of Constantinople as the ultimate means of legitimation. Territorial control was merely one aspect of the self-fashioning of imperium in exile, where even commitment to Orthodoxy became a means of distinguishing among the three rival claimants.¹⁰ The fact that Nicaea engaged in Unionist discussions, for example, proved a point of contention against which Epirote and Trapezuntine factions positioned themselves. It is also during this period of exile that a more fully articulated form of a Byzantine “Hellenic” identity was cultivated.¹¹ Michael Angold has argued that

10 A. Eastmond, *Art and Identity in Thirteenth-Century Byzantium: Hagia Sophia and the Empire of Trebizond* (Aldershot–Burlington, 2004), 3, has characterized the ethos of this period of exile well: “While Constantinople remained in Latin hands and the Greek contenders sought to build up their own power bases outside the symbolic capital, the war had to be fought by different means, in which government and Orthodoxy, honour and legitimacy, ceremony and ritual were all key weapons. It was a fight for the aura, symbols and authority of imperial rule as much as for the real power that might accompany it. This was a battle to recreate the empire in exile; and each successor state sought to argue that it was the true inheritor of the power and authority of the Byzantine empire and that only its ruler could legitimately claim the titles and the attributes of the emperor.” See also D. Angelov, “Byzantine Ideological Reactions to the Latin Conquest of Constantinople,” in *Urbs Capta: The Fourth Crusade and Its Consequences*, ed. A. Laiou (Paris, 2005), 293–310 and also in the same volume, A. Stavridou-Zafra, “The Political Ideology of the State of Epiros,” 311–23.

11 The literature on the subject of Hellenism in Byzantium, especially in relation to imperial ideology in Nicaea, is extensive. See H. Ahrweiler, “L’expérience nicéenne,” *DOP* 29 (1975): 21–40; eadem, *L’idéologie politique de l’Empire byzantin* (Paris, 1975), 60–64; M. Angold, “Byzantine ‘Nationalism’ and the Nicæan Empire,” *BMGS* 1 (1975): 49–70; idem, “Greeks and Latins After 1204: The Perspective of Exile,” in *Latins and Greeks in the Eastern Mediterranean After 1204*, ed. B. Arbel, B. Hamilton, and D. Jacoby (London, 1989), 63–86; P. Gounaridis, “‘Grecs’, ‘Hellènes’ et ‘Romains’ dans l’état Nicée,” in *Αφιέρωμα στον Νίκο Σβορώνο*, ed. B. Kremmydas, Ch. Maltezou, and N. M. Panagiotakes, 2 vols. (Rethymno, 1986), 1:248–57; D. A. Zakythinos, “Rome dans la pensée politique de Byzance du XIII^e au XV^e siècle: La ‘théorie romaine’ à l’épreuve des faits,” in *Βυζάντιον. Αφιέρωμα στον Ανδρέα Ν. Σπύρτο*, 2 vols. (Athens, 1986), 1:207–21; S. Vryonis, Jr., “Byzantine Cultural Self-Consciousness in the Fifteenth Century,” in *The Twilight of Byzantium: Aspects of Cultural and Religious History in the Late Byzantine Empire*, ed. S. Ćurčić and D. Mouriki (Princeton, 1991), 5–14; A. Politis, “From Christian Roman Emperors to the Glorious Greek Ancestors,” in *Byzantium and the Modern Greek Identity*, ed. D. Ricks and P. Magdalino (Aldershot–Brookfield, 1998), 1–14; P. Magdalino, “Hellenism and Nationalism in Byzantium,” in *Tradition and Transformation in Medieval Byzantium*

the concept of “Hellenic” as a pendant to “Roman” identity emerged in this period as a means of differentiating Nicene Greeks not only from the Latins but also from the other Greeks, particularly in Epiros.¹² The Treaty of Nymphaion, therefore, was set on the eve of the reconquest of Constantinople, when the future configuration of the Byzantine Empire was still very much uncertain—when negotiations over Byzantine identity in exile were at their height and rivalries among claimants still undetermined. The treaty presented the possibility of legitimacy for Nicene rulers through the restoration of the imperial city of New Rome.

From among the competing successor states of Nicaea, Epiros, and Trebizond, Nicaea under the Laskarids ultimately assumed dominance. Nicaea alone minted gold coinage during the interregnum, it was physically closest to Constantinople, and it was the first to claim a new ecumenical patriarch following the installation of a Latin patriarch of Constantinople.¹³

(Aldershot–Brookfield, 1991), article XIV, 1–27; R. Macrides and P. Magdalino, “The Fourth Kingdom and the Rhetoric of Hellenism,” in *The Perception of the Past in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. P. Magdalino (London, 1992), 139–56; J. Koder, “Griechische Identitäten im Mittelalter: Aspekte einer Entwicklung,” in *Βυζάντιο Κράτος και Κοινωνία: Μυμη Νίκου Οικονομική*, ed. A. Avramea, A. Laiou, and E. Chrysos (Athens, 2003), 297–316; Angelov, “Byzantine Ideological Reactions,” 299–303; R. Beaton, “Antique Nation? ‘Hellenes’ on the Eve of Greek Independence and in Twelfth-Century Byzantium,” *BMGS* 31, no. 1 (2007): 76–95; A. Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge, 2007), 317–88; idem, “Historicism in Byzantine Thought and Literature,” *DOP* 61 (2007): 1–24; D. Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204–1330* (Cambridge, 2007), 95–98; G. Page, *Being Byzantine: Greek Identity before the Ottomans* (Cambridge, 2008); and C. Rapp, “Hellenic Identity, Romanitas, and Christianity in Byzantium,” in *Hellenisms: Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity from Antiquity to Modernity*, ed. K. Zacharia (Aldershot–Burlington, 2008), 127–47.

12 Angold, “Byzantine ‘Nationalism,’” 64. Cf. Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 383. The particular relevance of Hellenism as the context for the textile in Genoa is addressed at greater length toward the end of this study.

13 On the coinage of Nicaea, see *DOC* 4.2:447–540. C. Morrisson, “Byzantine Money: Its Production and Circulation,” in *EHB*, 3:933, points out that Nicaea alone struck “a complete series of Komnenian denominations.” Theodore I Laskaris did not strike gold but Vatatzes and Theodore II did. The main mint for the Nicene Empire was situated at Magnesia, which is where the treasury was also located. The city of Nicaea was the ecclesiastic center and residence of the patriarch—it was closer to Constantinople in order “to underline its claims to the succession, but the city was of

Through a rapid series of events, Michael Palaiologos assumed power of the Nicene empire in exile: the death of Theodore Laskaris and subsequent revolt against George Mouzalon resulted in the appointment of Michael as regent for, and then coemperor with, John IV Laskaris, the eight-year-old heir to the empire. Success at the Battle of Pelagonia (1259), where Nicene forces overthrew the Epirote coalition, further secured the position of Nicaea generally and Michael Palaiologos in particular. This prompted an initial unsuccessful attempt at recovering Constantinople (the Siege of Galata) and set the stage for the Treaty of Nymphaion and the successful Byzantine restoration of Constantinople (1261).¹⁴

The Treaty of Nymphaion thus aimed to distinguish Nicaea as the legitimate Greek successor state, and at the same time it marked the culmination of a longer history of Byzantine-Genoese diplomatic relations that can be traced back to an initial alliance of the mid-twelfth century that also involved Italian commercial rivalries. Naval support was exchanged

not merely for gold or silver but for trading privileges.¹⁵ The Byzantines relied on western mercenary assistance and Italian cities competed against each other for Byzantine commercial privileges, the most significant of which was exemption from or reduction of the *kommerkion*, or ten-percent excise tax on goods throughout the empire.¹⁶ By the twelfth century the Republics of Venice, Pisa, and Genoa vied for the favor of the Byzantine emperor to secure economic privileges. Although both Genoa and Pisa in the late eleventh century had focused their attentions on western Mediterranean trade while Venice dominated eastern trade, the crusader states provided all three cities with a common focus in the East. Venice had received substantial privileges from Alexios Komnenos as early as 1081, and Pisa followed suit in 1111. It was not, however, until 1155 that Manuel Komnenos and the Genoese entered into an alliance. The Byzantine emperor at this time promised a trading quarter in Constantinople

quite secondary importance in the organization of the state" (*DOC* 5.1:57). In 1208, Theodore Laskaris had Michael Autoreianos elected patriarch. His first act as patriarch, not surprisingly, was to crown and anoint Theodore and thus, in the words of Michael Angold, "The Byzantine Empire was born in exile": *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni 1081–1261* (Cambridge, 1995), 516. See idem, *Byzantine Government in Exile: Government and Society under the Laskarids of Nicaea, 1204–1261* (London, 1975); D. M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261–1453*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1993), 19–37; N. Oikonomides, "La rinascita delle istituzioni bizantine dopo il 1204," in *Federico II e il mondo mediterraneo*, ed. P. Toubert and A. Paravicini Bagliani (Palermo, 1995), 320–32, repr. in *Society, Culture and Politics in Byzantium*, article XV; and G. Prinzing, "Das byzantinische Kaisertum im Umbruch—Zwischen regionaler Aufspaltung und erneuter Zentrierung in den Jahren 1204–1282," in *Legitimation und Funktion des Herrschers vom ägyptischen Pharao zum neuzeitlichen Diktator*, ed. R. Gundlach and H. Weber (Stuttgart, 1992), 129–83.

14 See D. J. Geanakoplos, "Greco-Latin Relations on the Eve of the Byzantine Restoration: The Battle of Pelagonia, 1259," *DOP* 7 (1953): 99–141, and idem, *Emperor Michael Palaeologos* (n. 9 above), 47–74. Paribeni, "Il pallio di San Lorenzo" (n. 5 above), 29, rightly points out that the Battle of Pelagonia of 1259 marked a decisive change in the political situation. It is important to note that following the Battle of Pelagonia Michael secured diplomatic alliances on many fronts—with the Seljuks, Mongols, and Bulgarians. The Genoese alliance, therefore, was one component of the larger diplomatic strategy. See R. Macrides, "The New Constantine and the New Constantinople—1261?" *BMGS* 6 (1980): 33, and eadem, *George Akropolites: The History* (Oxford–New York, 2007), 367–75.

15 See F. Dölger and J. Karayannopoulos, *Byzantinische Urkundenlehre* (Munich, 1968), 1:89–107; F. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches: Von 565–1453*, part 3, *Regesten von 1204–1282* (Munich–Berlin, 1932); S. Origone, *Bisanzio e Genova* (Genoa, 1997), 87–124; M. Balard, *La Romanie génoise: XIIe–début du XVe siècle*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1978); idem, "The Genoese in the Aegean (1204–1566)," in *Latins and Greeks in the Eastern Mediterranean After 1204* (n. 11 above), 158–74; G. W. Day, *Genoa's Response to Byzantium, 1155–1204: Commercial Expansion and Factionalism in a Medieval City* (Urbana, 1988); *Genova, Pisa e il Mediterraneo tra due e trecento* (Genoa, 1984); M. Tangheroni, *Commercio e navigazione nel Medioevo* (Rome, 1996); and D. Jacoby, "Byzantium, the Italian Maritime Powers, and the Black Sea Before 1204," *BZ* 100, no. 2 (2007): 677–99. See also A. Laiou-Thomadakis, "The Byzantine Economy in the Mediterranean Trade System, Thirteenth to Fifteenth Centuries," *DOP* 34–35 (1980–81): 177–222, repr. in eadem, *Gender, Society and Economic Life in Byzantium* (Aldershot–Brookfield, 1992), article VII; and her contributions to *EHB*, in particular "Economic and Noneconomic Exchange," 2:681–96, "Exchange and Trade, Seventh–Twelfth Centuries," 2:697–708, "Economic Thought and Ideology," 3:1123–44.

16 On the κομμέρκιον see D. Jacoby, "Italian Privileges and Trade in Byzantium before the Fourth Crusade: A Reconsideration," *Annuario de Estudios Medievales* 24 (1994): 349–68, repr. in *Trade, Commodities and Shipping*, article III; M. F. Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy, c. 300–1450* (Cambridge, 1985), 596–98; N. Oikonomides, "The Role of the Byzantine State in the Economy," in *EHB*, 3:987–88 and 1050–55; idem, "The Economic Region of Constantinople: From Directed Economy to Free Economy, and the Role of the Italians," in *Europa medievale e mondo bizantino*, ed. G. Arnaldi and G. Cavallo (Rome, 1997), 221–38; as well as K. P. Matschke, "Commerce, Trade, Markets, and Money: Thirteenth–Fifteenth Centuries," in *EHB*, 2:771–806.

replete with a piazza, an *embolos*, and *skalai*,¹⁷ as well as a reduction of the *kommerkion* throughout the empire.¹⁸ In return, Genoa was to defend Constantinople and was forbidden to enter into alliances against her. In addition to such privileges, which were advantageous for trade, the Byzantines offered the municipal government of Genoa an annuity of five hundred *hyperpyra* and two *pallia* of silk for fourteen years. Furthermore, the archbishop of Genoa was to receive sixty *hyperpyra* annually and one *pallium* of silk. Like most treaties of the time, the factors under consideration were reductions of taxes on trade within Constantinople and throughout the empire, cash (*hyperpyra*), and silk (a total of three *pallia* in this instance).¹⁹

The stipulations of this pact were not honored by either party: neither the full amount of money nor the silk was ever disbursed, and Genoa formed

an alliance with one of Constantinople's main rivals, Sicily, within two years. By 1160, the Genoese finally received their quarter in the capital, but were driven out within another two years by the Venetians and Pisans, who had already established their own trading quarters there. After these same events recurred in 1170 (a reinstatement of the Genoese and immediate attack on the compound by the Venetians) Manuel Komnenos expelled the Venetians.²⁰ These events were not minor disputes relegated to the realm of trade alone. Rather, they carried substantial political weight, with ramifications extending throughout the Mediterranean in the following century.²¹ The enmity that Genoa felt toward Venice may have begun with twelfth-century trade competition, but ultimately Venice's commercial supremacy during the Latin occupation of Constantinople, including the Venetian defeat and expulsion of Genoa from Acre in 1258, exacerbated the rivalry and propelled the Genoese toward a second major alliance with the Byzantines, specifically with the Empire of Nicaea, headed by Michael Palaiologos, and it is here that the story of the silk in Genoa begins in earnest.

In March of 1261 Byzantine and Genoese leaders signed the treaty in Nymphaion that solidified their stance against Venice.²² Previously, in 1260, an advance Genoese embassy had opened negotiations with Michael Palaiologos, then regent for and coemperor with John IV Laskaris.²³ These preliminary negotia-

17 An ἔμβολος is a merchant street and σκάλαι are gangways for ships; both are advantageous for trade within the city and throughout the empire. On ἔμβολοι and the trading edge of the Golden Horn, see P. Magdalino, "The Maritime Neighborhoods of Constantinople: Commercial and Residential Functions, Sixth to Twelfth Century," *DOP* 55 (2001): 224, repr. in *Studies on the History and Topography of Byzantine Constantinople* (Aldershot–Burlington, 2007), article III. See also D. Jacoby, "The Venetian Quarter of Constantinople from 1082 to 1261, Topographical Considerations," in *Novum Millennium: Studies on Byzantine History and Culture Dedicated to Paul Speck 19 December 1999*, ed. C. Sode and S. Takács (Aldershot–Burlington, 2001), 153–70.

18 Jacoby, "Italian Privileges," 359, points out that the *kommerkion* reduction did not apply to all commodities. Genoa's privileges were modeled on the Pisan precedent and applied only to imported goods though there was a total exemption on bullion in order to encourage its importation. Day, *Genoa's Response* (n. 15 above), 24–25, points out that Genoa was also reenacting privileges promised by the Holy Roman Empire and establishing new alliances with Marseilles and Sicily. He describes 1154–61 as a formative period for the Genoese in terms of "networks of privileged trade throughout the Mediterranean [so that] their parochial attitudes changed to more cosmopolitan ones." See N. Oikonomides, "The Role of the Byzantine State in the Economy," in *EHB*, 3:1053–58, and Schreiner, "Bisanzio e Genova" (n. 9 above), 133–35.

19 While the money was paid to the government immediately, the silk was not; moreover, the archbishop received neither money nor cloth. Origone, *Bisanzio e Genova* (n. 15 above), 264–74, includes an appendix with all of the surviving acts of the diplomatic relations between Byzantium and Genoa. Jacoby, "Italian Privileges," 359, points out that the commercial and fiscal privileges granted to the Venetians, Pisans, and Genoese differed greatly. See S. A. Epstein, *Purity Lost: Transgressing Boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean, 1000–1400* (Baltimore, 2007), 98–110. See below for the renewal of the 1155 provisions in 1261.

20 Manuel arrested and expelled the Venetians in March 1171 and also confiscated their goods. According to J. Gill, the attack was merely "attributed" to the Venetians by Manuel while they were not in fact responsible: "Venice, Genoa and Byzantium," *ByzF* 10 (1985): 60. On the Genoese quarter, see C. Desimoni, "I Genovesi e i loro quartieri in Costantinopoli nel secolo XIII," *Giornale Linguistico di Archeologia, Storia e Belle Arti* 3 (1876): 217–74.

21 Relations between Byzantines and Italians living in Constantinople were especially tense following the Latin massacre by Andronikos I in 1182. See discussion in Day, *Genoa's Response*, 27–29 and Gill, "Venice, Genoa and Byzantium," 60–62.

22 As confirmed by three unrelated sources—Genoese, Greek, and Venetian—the negotiations leading up to the treaty seem to have been initiated by the Genoese, specifically by Guglielmo Boccanegra, "Captain of the People and virtual dictator of the (Genoese) Commune": see Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologos* (n. 9 above), 85.

23 The Genoese ambassadors Guglielmo Visconti and Guarnieri Giudice presumably stayed in the Empire of Nicaea through March of 1261. Genoese annalist Caffaro narrates the events, an excerpt of which is offered by Parma Armani, "Nuove indagini" (n. 5 above),

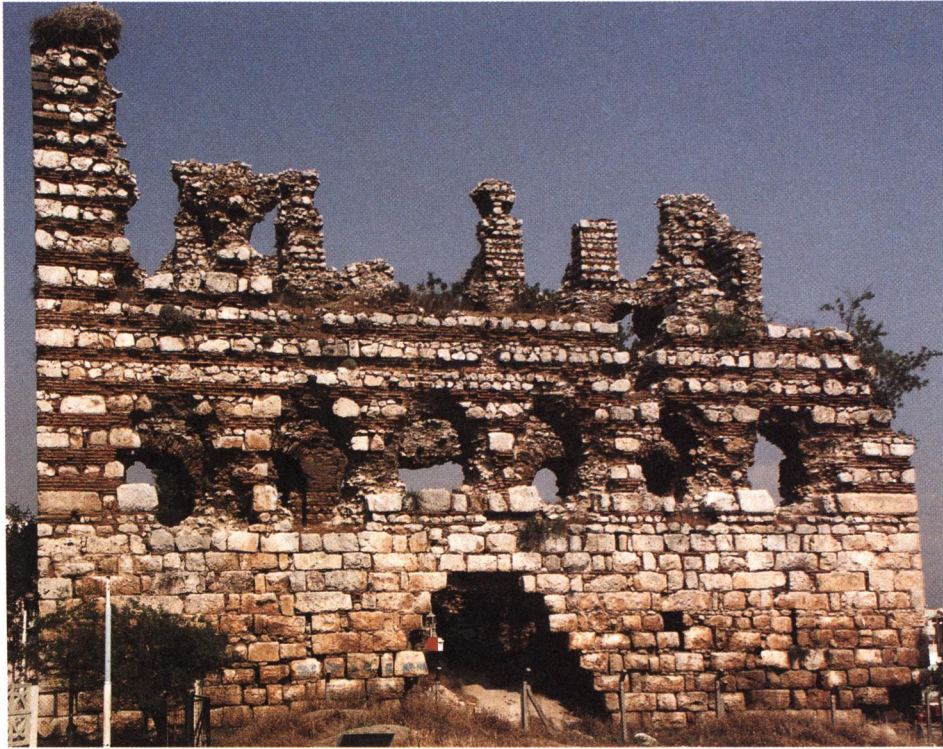


FIG. 2 Laskarid Palace at Nymphaion, Kemalpaşa (Izmir), 13th century (photo: Robert S. Nelson)

tions took place presumably at the imperial palace, the thirteenth-century Laskarid building still standing today in Kemalpaşa (fig. 2).²⁴ Sources confirm that both parties were united in enmity toward Venice: Michael wished to reestablish Constantinople as the rightful seat of Byzantine imperial power and Genoa desired commercial supremacy, which the Venetians had secured during the Latin occupation. The treaty was signed on 13 March in Nymphaion and ratified in Genoa on 10 July. Constantinople was reconquered by Michael's general Strategopoulos on 25 July, and the emperor in exile triumphantly entered the Queen of Cities on 15 August, the feast of the Dormition of the Virgin.²⁵

34–35. The animosity toward Venice is explicit in this text. See C. Manfroni, "Le relazioni fra Genova, l'Impero bizantino e i Turchi," *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* 28 (1898): 792; Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologos*, 85–87; Origone, *Bisanzio e Genova* (n. 15 above), 117; and Schreiner, "Bisanzio e Genova" (n. 9 above), 135–37.

24 Paribeni, "Il pallio di San Lorenzo" (n. 5 above), 242 n. 23 lists bibliography for the Laskarid palace. See also n. 115 below.

25 Ruth Macrides, "New Constantine" (n. 14 above), 13, has pointed out that Michael's triumphant *adventus* emphasized thanksgiving more than victory—it was scheduled to coincide

The treaty called for a permanent alliance between Byzantium and Genoa.²⁶ Fifty Genoese ships were placed at Michael's disposal for the reconquest of Constantinople,²⁷ and if victorious, the Genoese would receive all the maritime rights the Venetians had held previously. These included the right to trade duty-free

with the Dormition and he carried before him the Virgin's icon as he entered the city walls. His *adventus* stressed the divine nature of the Byzantine restoration of the imperial city. See Macrides, *George Akropolites* (n. 14 above), 383–88. See also C. Angelidi and T. Papamastorakis, "The Veneration of the Virgin Hodegetria and the Hodegon Monastery," in *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, ed. M. Vassilaki (Athens, 2000), 373–87.

26 A Latin copy of the treaty survives in the Genoese state archive: Archivio Segreto 2724 (B 5/39). The stipulation of the treaty can be found in Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden* (n. 15 above), 336–38 and Manfroni, "Relazioni" (n. 23 above), 791–809 and 647–67. See also Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Paleologus*, 75–91; Origone, *Bisanzio e Genova*, 113–24, esp. 119–22; and G. Caro, "Genova e la Supremazia sul Mediterraneo (1257–1311)," *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, n.s., 14 (1974), 1:100–113. The only Greek account of the Treaty of Nymphaion is preserved in Holobolos's oration, discussed below.

27 Of the fifty ships allocated, only sixteen vessels were actually dispatched: Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Paleologus*, 86–87. The Byzantine emperor was responsible for the expense of provisioning the ships.

throughout the empire (present Byzantine territories as well as those to be conquered in the future), a merchant quarter in Constantinople and other significant cities, exclusive access to Black Sea ports, and absolute possession of the city of Smyrna. In exchange for these privileges, Genoa was obliged to defend the empire in times of war and to prevent the arming of warships against Constantinople in Genoese waters. In addition, a clause from the unsuccessful 1155 alliance was renewed.²⁸ To guarantee Genoa commercial supremacy,²⁹ Michael was to present five hundred *hyperpyra* and two *pallia* of silk to the Commune of Genoa annually and sixty *hyperpyra* and one *pallium* to the archbishop of Genoa annually.³⁰ The two treaties, separated by more than a century and by the loss of Constantinople, involve a different set of privileges and yet each specifies, in addition to specie, the transfer of silk. Silk was the precious, portable, and prestigious currency of Byzantine diplomacy.

Verbal and Visual Tribute: Manuel Holobolos's Imperial Orations

Greek sources are largely silent concerning the Treaty of Nymphaion. Neither Akropolites nor Pachymeres provides an account of the treaty's details, presumably because its terms were disadvantageous for the Byzantines. The silence is also understandable given that the reconquest of Constantinople ultimately had little to do with Genoese assistance; instead it is attributed by most modern historians to luck and by

Byzantine contemporaries to divine will.³¹ The only Greek text to describe the Treaty of Nymphaion in any detail is an encomium to Michael Palaiologos composed by Manuel Holobolos.³² The encomium elaborates the details of the Genoese-Byzantine negotiations in an attempt to praise the emperor's skilled diplomacy, and also describes the exchange of diplomatic gifts, including the textile that still survives in Genoa.

According to Ruth Macrides' generally accepted chronology, Holobolos's three encomia for Michael VIII were composed as a series to be delivered on three successive Christmases: 1265, 1266, and 1267.³³ The first oration narrates imperial deeds that took place from 1259 to 1261, including the Battle of Pelagonia, the siege at Galata, and the Treaty of Nymphaion; the second focuses on the emperor's return to Constantinople in 1261; and the third and final oration addresses his proclamation as emperor and his building activities. In praising the emperor's skilled diplomacy at the Treaty of Nymphaion, Holobolos's first oration claims that the Genoese ambassadors, after an eloquent speech honoring the Byzantine emperor, swore oaths and received

28 The text is explicit on this. See Manfroni, "Relazioni," 795. Both in 1168 and 1192, the original terms of the 1155 alliance were almost reinstated, according to G. W. Day, "Byzantino-Genoese Diplomacy and the Collapse of Emperor Manuel's Western Policy, 1168–71," *Byzantion* 48 (1978): 396 and 399.

29 Article 4 is summarized in Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Paleologus*, 87–89, and Nicol, *Last Centuries* (n. 13 above), 34. See Jacoby, "Italian Privileges" (n. 16 above), 359; Schreiner, "Zwei Denkmäler" (n. 5 above), 249; and Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese* (n. 9 above), 149–51. In the words of Paribeni, "Il pallio di San Lorenzo" (n. 5 above), 230, Genoa would receive essentially "le chiavi del potere economico dell'impero."

30 Manfroni, "Relazioni," 795: "duo palia deaurata . . . et palium unum deauratum ut memoratur in privilegio felicis memorie domini Emmanuelis imperatoris quondam grecorum." Schreiner, "Zwei Denkmäler," 253 n. 21, has noted that this repeats the provisions of the earlier provisions of Manuel I Komnenos and suggests that they had not been fulfilled.

31 Michael characterizes his role in the Byzantine restoration of Constantinople as the instrument of divine will in the *typikon* for the Monastery of St. Demetrios in Constantinople. See H. Grégoire, "Imperatoris Michaelis Palaeologi de vita sua," *Byzantion* 29–30 (1959–60): 455–59 (VII–VIII), and *BMFD*, 3:1245. Akropolites describes the conquest of Constantinople as occurring through divine providence irrespective of Michael, who was woken from sleep to learn the news of the capture of the city. See Macrides, *George Akropolites* (n. 14 above), 375–80.

32 M. Treu, ed., *Orationes*, 2 vols. (Programm des königlichen Victoria-Gymnasiums, Potsdam, 1906), 1:30–50 (speech begins on 46), and X. A. Siderides, "Μανουὴλ Ὁλοβώλου, Ἐγκώμιον εἰς Μιχαὴλ Ἡ' Παλαιολόγον," *EEBS* 3 (1926): 168–91 (speech begins on 174). On Holobolos, see M. Treu, "Manuel Holobolos," *BZ* 5 (1896): 538–59, C. N. Constantinides, *Higher Education in Byzantium in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries (1204–ca. 1310)* (Nicosia, 1982), 52–58; R. Macrides, "Holobolos," *ODB* 2:940; and *PLP* no. 21047. On Holobolos's scholarly engagement, which included the translation of Latin texts into Greek, see note 155 below.

33 Macrides, "New Constantine" (n. 14 above), 16–20. The dating of Holobolos's three orations has been the subject of considerable debate. F. Dölger, "Die dynastische Familienpolitik des Kaisers Michael VIII. Palaiologos, 1258–1282," in *Festschrift Eduard Eichmann* (Paderborn, 1940), 179–90, repr. in *Paraspora: 30 Aufsätze zur Geschichte, Kultur und Sprache des byzantinischen Reiches* (Munich, 1961), 178–88, and Schreiner, "Zwei Denkmäler," 249–57, dated the first speech to Christmas 1261. Of the studies of the textile in Genoa, Paribeni, "Il pallio di San Lorenzo," 231, is the first to consider the textile in light of Macrides' revised dating.

gifts of silk (*peploi*): “swearing oaths of allegiance to you and receiving two gorgeous *peploi*—a generous gift of your Majesty worth everything to them. They turned home, praising your kindness with thundering voice and proclaiming you a King like no other.”³⁴ The orator then offers a lengthy description of the two gifts, insisting that he “must leave a record of them.” The first *peplos*, which is only briefly recorded, depicted the emperor’s “godlike form.”³⁵ The description of the second, however, is more detailed and leaves no ambiguity about its technique or iconography. This second *peplos*, the encomiast claims, is fashioned in gold threads and depicts the glorious passion of Saint Lawrence and his companions.³⁶ Holobolos describes a tableau of the agonies of the martyrs, lingering on the instruments of their torture: “One could see there the display of the wise martyrs in the face of tyranny, their noble resolution, the varied and inventive punishments inflicted upon them by their torturers: the iron nails, the *trochanters*, torsion, fire, swords, chains, fetters, prisons, and every other instruments of torture.”³⁷ He further

informs us that these visual details were explained by Latin inscriptions (Ἰταλικῶν γραμμάτων)³⁸ and could be read as a book. “The *peplos* was not a *peplos* but a book,” he writes, “and a book not of God’s prophetic commandments but of the trials of youthful martyrs of Christ.”³⁹

Holobolos’s verbal description has been linked to the surviving textile in Genoa.⁴⁰ The iconography of Saint Lawrence is exceedingly rare in Byzantine art, and the addition of Latin inscriptions is rarer still. Even the notion of reading the silk as a book matches the format of the extant textile, on which the trials and tortures of Saints Lawrence, Sixtus, and Hippolytus unfold from left to right along two registers in three distinct yet continuous narrative segments. But what does it mean that the orator’s description matches the surviving textile in Genoa?

There are a number of ways to explain this coincidence of text and artifact.⁴¹ On the basis of the imperial oration, Pauline Johnstone, in the first thorough art historical investigation of the silk, has argued that the silk in Genoa was one of the very textiles specified in the Treaty of Nymphaion itself, that it was given to the Genoese in fulfillment of the terms of the treaty at some point after the 1261 Byzantine restoration of Constantinople, probably in either 1262 or 1267, when Byzantine-Genoese relations were strong.⁴² Peter Schreiner, however, has called attention to the

34 Treu, *Orationes*, 1:47, and Siderides, “Μανουήλ Ὀλοβώλου,” 188. Unless otherwise noted, translations are the author’s. Particular thanks are due to Anthony Kaldellis for discussing the oration’s lexical nuances and possible interpretations. Holobolos uses myriad cloth- and garment-related words in the passage describing the Genoese-Byzantine encounter (ἱμάτιον, ἐνδυμα, χιτῶνα), but describes the silken gifts as *peploi*. On the terminology, *peplos* versus *pallium*, see Falcone, “Il ‘Pallio’ bizantino” (n. 5 above), 346 n. 16.

35 Treu, *Orationes*, 1:47.8–10, and Siderides, “Μανουήλ Ὀλοβώλου,” 188. While Holobolos rushes over the iconography, he lingers on the medium: ὁ μὲν τὴν σὴν θεοειδῆ περιεῖχε μορφὴν· οὐκ ἐκ χρυσοῦ ἢ τινοῦ ἄλλης πολυτίμου ὕλης ἐσκευασμένον, ἀλλ’ ἐκ χρωμάτων κομμωτικῶν. Thus this first *peplos* was woven with colored threads or even painted, although the latter seems unlikely. See Paribeni, “Il *pallio* di San Lorenzo,” 231, who speculates on the relevance of the reference to the Assyrian king, which follows, on lines 10–12.

36 Treu, *Orationes*, 1:47.12–15, and Siderides, “Μανουήλ Ὀλοβώλου,” 188–89: τῷ δ’ ἄλλῳ ἐκ χρυσοῦ πρὸς κλωστήρα τετορευμένον οἱ τοῦ καλλινίκου μάρτυρος Λαυρεντίου καὶ τῶν σὺν αὐτῷ περιφανεῖς ἐνεχαράχθησαν ἁγῶνες καὶ τὰ μέχρι θανάτου διὰ Χριστὸν σκάμματα.

37 Treu, *Orationes*, 1:47.15–25, and Siderides, “Μανουήλ Ὀλοβώλου,” 189: εἰδέ τις ἂν ἐκεῖ τὰς πρὸ προσώπου τυραννικοῦ τῶν σοφῶν μαρτύρων παραστάσεις, τὰς γενναίας αὐτῶν ἐνστάσεις, τὰς παρὰ τῶν βασανιστῶν σκευοφορουμένας τούτοις πολυειδεῖς καὶ πολυτρόπους κολάσεις, τοὺς σιδηροῦς ὀνυχας, τοὺς τροχαντήρας, τοὺς καταπέλτας, τὸ πῦρ, τὰ ξίφη, τὰς ἀλύσεις, τὰ δεσμά, τὰς εἰρκτάς καὶ πᾶν ἄλλο βασανιστήριον ὄργανον, ὃν ἕκαστον καὶ ἐπιστήμασι δι’ Ἰταλικῶν γραμμάτων ἐνεσημαίνετο· οὕτως ἔφερε θαυμασίως ὁ μέγας πάντα πέπλος ἐκεῖνος τὸ ἱερὸν τοῖς γενναίοις ἀνάθημα μάρτυσιν

οἰκονομία βασιλικῇ, ὡς ἄρα οὐ πέπλος ὁ πέπλος ἦν, ἀλλὰ βιβλος καὶ βιβλος οὐ προσταγμάτων θεοῦ τὸ προφητικόν, ἀλλὰ σκαμμάτων νεανικῶν μαρτύρων Χριστοῦ. Paribeni, “Il *pallio* di San Lorenzo,” 232, points out that despite all the detail Holobolos does not mention the grate or grill of Lawrence’s martyrdom. Moreover he makes reference to other instruments that are not part of the hagiographic tradition or the iconography of the textile.

38 See Paribeni, “Il *pallio* di San Lorenzo,” 242 n. 27 on this phrase.

39 See above, note 37.

40 Holobolos’s oration has been cited by most of the major articles dedicate to the Genoese textile (by Johnstone, Parma Armani, Falcone, and Paribeni).

41 The most significant difference between the two is that Holobolos describes the hagiographic narrative of the *peplos* but does not mention the image of the emperor alongside the archangel and saint Lawrence. This critical omission is discussed below.

42 Johnstone, “Byzantine ‘Pallio,’” 101, proposes that the textile in Genoa relates to church unification, and hence should be dated to 1262, when Michael approached Urban IV on the subject, or 1267, when similar efforts were made with Clement IV.

differences between the orator's description of the negotiations and the surviving copy of the treaty, noting that according to Holobolos the Genoese ambassadors were given two elaborate *peploi* whereas the treaty enumerates three textiles total, two for the commune and one for the archbishop.⁴³ Even if the oration describes the exact silk in Genoa, the surviving cloth may not have been one of those stipulated in the original treaty.⁴⁴ Following Schreiner, Carla Falcone points out that Holobolos's emphasis on the textile in his oration suggests that it was a gift for a very specific circumstance, not an annual donation stipulated by a pact.⁴⁵ The critical distinction to bear in mind is between silks bearing imagery custom-made for a specific diplomatic occasion and more generic textiles, which, as noted at the beginning of this article, could be packed in advance and extended as diplomatic incentives in various contexts. Unlike more generic textile gifts specified in either a diplomatic packing list or in the clauses of treaties, the extant silk in Genoa is singular and its entire design corresponds precisely to the circumstances of the Treaty of Nymphaion.⁴⁶

43 Schreiner, "Zwei Denkmäler" (n. 5 above), 253.

44 Parma Armani, "Nuove indagini" (n. 5 above), 37, also believes that the textile was sent to Genoa on the basis of the encomium, but points out that it is impossible to determine if any of the textiles specified in the treaty ever really reached Genoa in reality.

45 Falcone, "Il 'Pallio' bizantino" (n. 5 above), 338. On the generic quality of the textiles specified in the treaty, see Parma Armani, "Nuove indagini," 36–37. See also note below.

46 Two manuscripts associated with diplomatic ventures clarify the distinction between "custom-made" and "stock" gifts. It is often thought that Michael VIII sent Louis IX a New Testament codex illuminated with full-page portraits of the evangelists in conjunction with meetings held in France in 1274 on the unity of the Greek and Latin churches. In the margin of the miniature of St. Matthew on folio 2v of Coislin 200, an inscription records Michael's name, thus indicating the codex to be a gift from him. Assuming the inscription is to be trusted, which is not entirely a given, the manuscript exhibits no other visible traces of its function as a gift. It was probably made in advance, not necessarily for any particular diplomatic purpose, and *selected* by the emperor when he found himself in need of a gift to send to France with his envoys. In the early fifteenth century when Manuel II Palaiologos sought western aid, he too sent a book to France. A pre-existing fourteenth-century copy of the works of Dionysios the Areopagite was selected and amended with an author portrait as well as an imperial family portrait and was then sent to the Abbey of Saint-Denis outside Paris. Manuel's gift, therefore, involved both recycling and originality. In other words, a stock gift was customized to suit Manuel II's particular diplomatic occasion. Unlike both of these instances, the surviving

While the textile in Genoa is unique among surviving Byzantine silks in its sophisticated visual program tailored to its diplomatic context, a similar historiated silk, no longer extant, is attested by a Vatican inventory from 1295.⁴⁷ Featuring an interweaving of contemporary political and holy figures, this silk was given by Michael VIII Palaiologos to Pope Gregory X. Its imagery too seems to have corresponded to the delicate political context of its exchange. It was given to the pope in conjunction with the Council of Lyons in 1274, the council at which Michael agreed to the union of the Greek and Latin churches.⁴⁸ According to the inventory description, the design of this piece reflected the goals of the council, namely, unification. Inscriptions

silk in Genoa associated with the Treaty of Nymphaion as well as the lost silk associated with the Council of Lyons (to be mentioned below) both exhibit unique imagery that must have been specially designed for their particular diplomatic context. On Coislin 200, see A. Weyl Carr, *Byzantine Illumination 1150–1250: The Study of a Provincial Tradition* (Chicago, 1987), cat. no. 93, and J. Lowden, "The Luxury Book as Diplomatic Gift," in Shepard and Franklin, *Byzantine Diplomacy* (n. 1 above), 256–59, who questions the authenticity of the inscription, claiming it was written by an "unskillful Latin hand." See also P. Radiciotti, "Episodi di digrafismo greco-latino a Costantinopoli: Giovanni Parastro ed i codici Coislin 200 e Parigino greco 54," *Römische Historische Mitteilungen* 39 (1996): 185–86 for a different interpretation of the inscription. On the later copy of the book offered by Manuel II, see Musée du Louvre, *Byzance: L'art byzantine dans les collections publiques françaises* (Paris, 1992), 463–64 (cat. no. 353); *Le trésor de Saint-Denis* (Paris, 1991), 276–77 (cat. no. 60).

47 É. Molinier, *Inventaire du trésor du Saint-Siège sous Boniface VIII (1295)* (Paris, 1888), 82–83: "... et subtile dictas figuras est imago B. Petri, coram quo est imago domini Gregorii tenentis per manum Paleologum et presentat eum beato Petro reconciliatum, cum litteris grecis et latinis. ... This no longer extant textile is mentioned by Johnstone, "Byzantine 'Pallio,'" (n. 5 above), 101; and eadem, *Byzantine Tradition* (n. 2 above), 73, 76–77; Parma Armani, "Nuove indagini" (n. 5 above), 37; and Paribeni, "Il pallio di San Lorenzo," (n. 5 above), 234.

48 See V. Laurent and J. Darrouzès, *Dossier grec de l'Union de Lyon 1273–1277* (Paris, 1976); Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus* (n. 9 above), 258–304; D. M. Nicol, "The Byzantine Reaction to the Second Council of Lyons, 1274," *Studies in Church History* 7 (1971): 113–46, repr. in *Byzantium: Its Ecclesiastical History and Relations with the Western World* (London, 1971), article VI; J. Gill, "The Church Union of the Council of Lyons (1274) Portrayed in Greek Documents," *OCP* 40 (1974): 5–45, and L. Pieralli, "La corrispondenza diplomatica tra Roma e Costantinopoli nei secoli XIII e XIV," in *Byzance et le monde extérieur* (Paris, 2005), 151–63. On the ideological implications of the central scene of the silk regarding issues of church unification, see Johnstone, "Byzantine 'Pallio,'" 100, and Paribeni, "Il pallio di San Lorenzo," 234.



FIG. 3 Embroidered silk of despot and *sebastokrator* Constantine with angels, ca. 1210, Treasury of San Marco, Venice (photo: author)

were bilingual (*litteris grecis et latinis*), and in addition to scenes from the life of Christ and the Apostles, it included a scene of Gregory leading the Palaiologan emperor to Saint Peter. The imagery of the Byzantine emperor Michael being led to Saint Peter, as the patron saint of the Roman church, symbolizes the uniting of eastern and western churches, the purpose of the diplomatic occasion that prompted its creation.

The treasury of San Marco in Venice preserves another Byzantine silk, which, though poorly restored in the eighteenth century, may be linked to a *promissio* from the beginning of the thirteenth century (1210) between Michael I of Epiros and Doge Pietro Ziani (fig. 3).⁴⁹ On a bright yellow silk ground, which is not the original support,⁵⁰ two angels labeled Michael and

Gabriel stand in full regalia, and in the lower right corner one may discern the contours of a kneeling figure. All that remains of the disembodied donor is the luxurious textile pattern of his shell-like cloak and the inscription embroidered below the feet of the two arch-angels, identifying him as “despot Constantine”—that is, the son of Michael I—“Komnenian born, *sebastokrator* of the Angeloi family, descendant of the ruler of the Ausonoi.”⁵¹ The pact between Epiros and Venice specified cloth for the Italian city’s main church of San Marco and also for the doge.⁵² Although the textile in San Marco is nearly identical in shape (measuring 80 × 240 cm) to the one in Genoa, the formal arrangement remains distinct from both the surviving silk in Genoa and the lost Vatican silk. The design of the San Marco textile does not in any obvious manner refer to its diplomatic circumstances.⁵³ Conversely, the imagery of the

49 Two proposals about the dating and historical circumstances of this textile have been put forward. M. Theocharis, “Sur le sébastocrator Constantin Comnène Ange et l’endyté du musée de saint Marc à Venise,” *BZ* 56 (1963): 273–83; and in H. R. Hahnloser, *Il Tesoro di San Marco* (Florence, 1971), 91–97 esp. 94–96 (cat. no. 115), proposes the identification accepted here, that is, that the Constantine in question is the son of Michael I of Epiros. A. Cutler, “From Loot to Scholarship: Changing Modes in the Italian Response to Byzantine Artifacts, ca. 1200–1750,” *DOP* 49 (1995): 246–47, follows Theocharis. Conversely V. Laurent, “Le sébastocrator Constantin Ange et le peplum du musée de Saint-Marc à Venise,” *REB* 18 (1960): 208–13, followed by A. Guillou, “Inscriptions byzantines d’Italie sur tissu,” in *Aetos: Studies in Honour of Cyril Mango Presented to Him on April 14, 1998*, ed. I. Ševčenko and I. Hutter (Stuttgart, 1998), 172–74, suggests that the protagonist of the inscription is the brother of Emperors Isaac II and Alexis III, thus dating the cloth to the second half of the twelfth century.

50 During eighteenth-century restoration efforts, the embroidery was lifted entirely and reset on a new ground. Because of the textile’s

over-zealous restoration, it is useful mainly for its inscription and general composition. Another Byzantine embroidery, an *epitaphios*, was included along with this textile in some of the earliest treasury inventories. See Hahnloser, *Tesoro*, 96–97 (cat. no. 116). It was likewise transferred to a new ground in the eighteenth century.

51 Κομνηνοφύης δεσπότης Κωνσταντίνος σεβαστοκράτωρ Ἀγγελωνόμου γένους ξύναιμος αὐτάνακτος Αὐσόνων γένους. On the orthographic problems with the inscription, which may be attributed to a later restoration campaign, see Guillou, “Inscriptions byzantines,” 173. On the identification of “Constantine” see n. 49 above.

52 Hahnloser, *Tesoro*, 96: “unum pannum honorabile auro textum ad ornatum altaris sancti Marci et aliud unum vobis et successoribus vestris.”

53 It identifies its patron but not its destination. In this regard it functions like a coin, proclaiming the particular current authority of its source to an undifferentiated audience.

two silks sent by Michael VIII Palaiologos—one associated with the Council of Lyons (1274) and the other associated with the Treaty of Nymphaion (1261)—both speak to the very particular diplomatic allegiances of their commission.

Andrea Paribeni has reached a conclusion about the relationship of the surviving textile to the Treaty of Nymphaion similar to that of Falcone, and has further specified that the two *peploi* described by Holobolos were probably given to the Genoese delegation in July of 1261 with the ratification of the treaty.⁵⁴ Following this argument, the extant *peplos* was created in the Empire of Nicaea and extended as a gift before Michael's Byzantine forces reclaimed Constantinople—that is, between March and July of 1261.⁵⁵ The *peplos*, in other words, was made for the conclusion of the Treaty of Nymphaion and was not one of the annual cloths specified in the treaty's terms, which should have begun a year later, in 1262, after the Byzantine restoration of Constantinople.⁵⁶ Rather than seeing the textile within

the contractual setting of a political pact, or as a generic silk that would be appropriate in multiple contexts, the bestowal of the *peplos* should be understood as part of a ceremonial conclusion of the particular treaty—not a single surviving piece from among a series of anonymous fabrics stipulated in most diplomatic pacts of the time, but rather a singular, custom-created work whose extension as a gift was integral to the performance of imperial ideology. Holobolos's panegyric discloses precisely this role for the silk he discussed. While the oration offers textual corroboration for the extant textile, allowing us to situate it securely within the diplomatic context of the Treaty of Nymphaion, the encomium is also illuminating for what it reveals about the status of the image of the emperor, and specifically a silken image, as a diplomatic gift. In other words, Holobolos's speech provides more than documentary evidence; the verbal encomium provides the rhetorical tools best suited to interpret the visual encomium, the embroidered textile.

Immediately before describing the two *peploi* given to the Genoese ambassadors, Holobolos recounts their speech delivered to the emperor. The fictive words of the Italian ambassadors underscore their complete and total submission to the emperor: the Genoese claim to have subjected themselves entirely to the Byzantine ruler, abandoning democracy for the emperor's authority, hailing him not only as helmsman but as monarch and king. Holobolos claims that they requested an image of Michael as a visible expression of protection and love for their city: "Soothe the piercing love of this [city], through your image (σοῦ χαρακτήρος) rendered on a cloth: for the form of the beloved is a great remedy (φάρμακον) for lovers. It will be a strong defense against our enemies, an averter (ἀποτρόπαιον) against every plot, a powerful parapet for the city [Genoa] which is yours and ours, a strong tower and an adamant wall to face the enemy."⁵⁷

the imagery of the silk itself provides compelling evidence of its date and association with the particular diplomatic context of the Treaty of Nymphaion. Paired with the textual sources, the overall design of the piece suggests a date on the eve of the 1261 Byzantine restoration of Constantinople, and thus must have been made within the Empire of Nicaea.

57 Treu, *Orationes*, 1:46.27–34, and Siderides, "Μανουὴλ Ὀλοβόλου," 188 (both n. 32 above): δὸς ὡς δυνατόν σεαυτὸν τῇ σῇ πόλει καὶ ἡμετέρᾳ, παρηγόρησον διὰ τοῦ σοῦ χαρακτήρος πέπλῳ καὶ γραφαῖς ἐγκειμένου τὸν ταύτης διαπρύσιον ἔρωτα· μέγα τοῖς ἐρώσι φάρμακον καὶ γεγραμμένον τὸ τοῦ ἐρωμένου πέφυκε μόρφωμα.

54 Paribeni, "Il *pallio* di San Lorenzo" (n. 5 above), 232.

55 Schreiner was first to suggest that the textile was made in Nicaea not Constantinople, a conclusion corroborated by art historical evidence offered by Falcone and Paribeni, independent of each other. From the perspective of silk production in and around the Empire of Nicaea such an attribution is also likely. We know, for example, that Nicene Emperor John III Vatatzes, to promote indigenous silk production, prohibited wearing imported silk. See Jacoby, "Silk Economics and Cross-Cultural Interaction," 220, and idem, "Genoa, Silk Trade and Silk Manufacture," 24 (both n. 1 above). The Genoese, Jacoby claims, purchased raw silk from Byzantine and Turkish Asia Minor during the second half of the thirteenth century but not silks of Nicaean manufacture due to a diminished quality, preferring silk worked in Lucca. Indicative of this is the very textile in Genoa under investigation here, about which he writes: "instead of being woven into the cloth, its decoration was embroidered with gold and silk threads on plain samite, a device that substantially reduced manufacturing costs." Moreover, Jacoby, in "The Production of Silk Textiles in Latin Greece," in *Technology in Latin-Occupied Greece* (Athens, 2000), repr. in *Commercial Exchange Across the Mediterranean*, article XII, 25, points out that after 1204 the Latin emperors of Constantinople and the Greek rulers of Nicaea and Epiros produced silk dyed with cheaper purple colorants as alternatives to the murex of earlier times. After the Byzantine restoration of Constantinople, the Genoese continued to barter with silks obtained from Nicaea in addition to Italian textiles. See D. Deletant, "Genoese, Tatars and Rumanians at the Mouth of the Danube in the Fourteenth Century," *SEER* 62, no. 4 (1984): 515.

56 The possibility still remains that the textile was created and extended to the Genoese sometime between March of 1261 (when the initial negotiations took place) and December of 1265 (the delivery of Holobolos's oration). But the argument advanced here is that

The act of submission is followed by the bestowal of an imperial image; the image signals allegiance and protection. The word choices are also significant: the image is described as a *pharmakon* and an *apotropaion*, the former an ambiguous term, which can be translated in entirely opposite, almost contradictory ways,⁵⁸ and the later suggestive of cult images and amulets.⁵⁹

This evocative description of the power of the image of the emperor is cast in the voice of the foreign ambassadors. It is, in other words, delivered as a speech within a speech, after which the text returns to the orator's own voice for a description of the textile gifts—the *peploi*. The context for this passage in particular and the delivery of Holobolos's panegyric in general is also relevant. Imperial orations and encomia were part of Michael's concentrated effort to foster an "annual cycle of court ceremonial."⁶⁰ The *prokypsis* ceremony in particular became a "regularly staged ceremony" under Michael VIII Palaiologos.⁶¹ This ritualized imperial epiphany began under the Komnenoi but continued through the Nicaean period to find its fullest expression under the Palaiologoi. In this still-life ceremony, the imperial family ascended a platform (from which

the ceremony takes its name) that was closed off from view by a curtain until the appropriate moment—signaled by lights and sound—when it was drawn to reveal momentarily the framed immobile imperial bodies, and then closed again.⁶² Holobolos wrote at least twenty poems to accompany the *prokypsis* ceremony, most of which date to Michael VIII's rule.⁶³ The emphasis on the power of the imperial image in Holobolos's encomium, therefore, was part of a much larger ceremonial context of self-reflexive imperial oratory, which showcased the epiphanic power of the image of the emperor.

Although the *prokypsis* ceremony developed in the twelfth century, it is best known in the Palaiologan period—surviving texts are almost all from the later Byzantine era. The relationship of early Palaiologan ceremonies to Komnenian precedents suggests something of the logic underlying the Holobolos text and the textile in Genoa. Part of the evidence for the 1265–1266–1267 dating of the imperial orations hinges upon Holobolos's title *ρήτωρ τῶν ρητόρων*, which signals the orator's appointment to the post of rhetor, a promotion that has been read as part of the emperor's larger agenda of renewal, related to his need for legitimation. Michael was, after all, essentially a usurper. He had been crowned coemperor in Nicaea in 1259 after swearing publicly to refrain from conspiring against his junior and legitimate partner, John IV Laskaris.⁶⁴ But on Christmas day of 1261, after the reconquest of Constantinople, Michael ordered the blinding and exile of his young coemperor and was crowned again in Hagia Sophia. This secured Palaiologan rule in a newly restored Byzantine empire and it also incited the rage of Patriarch Arsenios, who promptly excommunicated the emperor. Manuel Holobolos too voiced objections to the blinding of John IV, and after having his nose

δύναται σου καὶ ἡ εἰκὼν, ἃν ἡμῖν παρεῖν, πολλὰ· ἀμυντήριον ἔσται κατὰ τῶν ἡμετέρων ἀντιπάλων στερρόν, πάσης ἐπιβουλῆς ἀποτρόπαιον, ἐπαλξίς τῇ σῇ καὶ ἡμετέρα πόλει κρατερὰ, προπύργιον ἰσχυρὸν καὶ τεῖχος ἀντικρυς ἀδαμάντινον.

58 The significance of the *pharmakon* for discussions of prestation has informed a wide range of critical thinkers from Friedrich Nietzsche to Jacques Derrida. The double-edged notion of the gift as both a blessing and a curse appears in Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra* and is a central concern of Derrida in both "Plato's Pharmacy" in *Dissemination* (Chicago, 1981), 131–32 and *Given Time*, vol. 1, *Counterfeit Money* (Chicago, 1992). For as Émile Benveniste has demonstrated with regard to Indo-European etymology, in "Gift and Exchange in the Indo-European Vocabulary," in *Problems in General Linguistics* (Coral Gables, FL, 1971), also excerpted in *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity*, ed. A. D. Schrift (New York, 1997), 33–42, the language of giving and taking are intimately related. For the implications of the gift as a critical term for medieval art history, see Hilsdale, "Gift," forthcoming in *Medieval Art History Today—Critical Terms*, a Special Issue of *Studies in Iconography* 33 (2012).

59 H. Maguire, "Magic and Money in the Early Middle Ages," *Speculum* 72, no. 4 (1997): 1040, repr. in *Image and Imagination in Byzantine Art* (Aldershot–Burlington, 2007), article V, links the woven portrait to the wonderworking icon of the Hodegetria.

60 Angelov, *Imperial Ideology* (n. 11 above), 47, calls attention to Michael's efforts to foster court ceremonial.

61 Ibid., 45.

62 On the *prokypsis* ceremony, see M. McCormick, "Prokypsis," *ODB* 3:1732–33; A. Heisenberg, *Aus der Geschichte und der Literatur der Palaiologenzeit* (Munich, 1920), 85–97; E. Jeffreys, "The Komnenian Prokypsis," *Parergon* 5 (1987): 38–53; O. Treitinger, *Die oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee nach ihrer Gestaltung im höfischen Zeremoniell: Vom oströmischen Staats- und Reichsgedanken* (Darmstadt, 1956), 112–18; E. H. Kantorowicz, "Oriens Augusti, lever du roi," *DOP* 17 (1963): 159–62; and Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 29–77, and 41–42 on the *prokypsis* in Nicaea.

63 Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 69.

64 On the legacy of these events, see T. Shawcross, "In the Name of the True Emperor: Politics of Resistance after the Palaiologan Usurpation," *BSI* 66, no. 1 (2008): 203–27. I thank Sarah Brooks for first bringing this reference to my attention.

and lips slit he retired from court life to the Prodomos monastery under the name Maximos. Arsenios refused to lift the anathema and eventually banned the emperor from entering the Great Church altogether. The animosity between emperor and patriarch having escalated to this level, Michael had Arsenios deposed, banished, and excommunicated in 1265.⁶⁵ Arsenios was then succeeded by Germanos III (1265–1266), during whose patriarchate Holobolos returned to court and composed the imperial orations.

Ruth Macrides has suggested that Germanos III was responsible for the orator's promotion to the post of rhetor and has stressed that his appointment should be read within the context of revival at this time.⁶⁶ Indeed, Holobolos's encomium emphasizes the renewal of ancient and venerable but obsolete customs, such as the annual ceremony in which tribute is offered to the emperor, including a *peplos* woven with scenes of the ruler's achievements for that year.⁶⁷ Here we see a slippage between visual and verbal forms of imperial tribute. Holobolos claims to know the appropriate iconographies for such *peploi* from other authors, not from actual textiles. Thus the textual *ekphrasis* of the material gift is an essential component of imperial encomia, which themselves are conceptualized as gifts or tributes to the emperor. Holobolos refers to one of his *logoi* explicitly as "annual tribute."⁶⁸ His gift is his rhetorical

invocation of the emperor's textile gifts.⁶⁹ Significantly, Holobolos concludes his description of the second *peplos* given to the Genoese ambassadors by comparing it to the great ancient *peplos* woven for Athena as part of the Panathenaia: this brightly dyed *peplos* woven by the Athenians for their "civic patron Pallas" featured an elaborate gigantomachy with cloud-gathering Zeus hurling thunderbolts and Athena fighting at his side.⁷⁰

With a classical allusion entirely in the spirit of the literati of his day, he contrasts the trials and tortures of Christian martyrs with the ancient prototype of civic tribute, a woven gift for the ancient goddess of Athens. Not surprisingly, Michael's gift is deemed superior to the ancient counterpart, but both *peploi* are woven with myths and hagiographies and both constitute tribute to their ruler: Athena as sacred patron and protector of Athens and Michael as beloved emperor and protector of both Byzantine and Genoese cities.

Weaving Allegiances: Hagiographic and Imperial Largesse

Holobolos's encomium praises imperial generosity through an extended *ekphrasis* on the *peploi* that were given to the Genoese ambassadors. The orator represents the Genoese as completely submissive to the emperor's power and ardent in their desire for a likeness of the emperor; again, it would be their remedy

65 It was under Patriarch Joseph I (1266–1269), Michael's own spiritual confessor, that the emperor finally received pardon. In an elaborate performance of penance in the Great Church on the feast day of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin on 2 February 1267, the emperor performed *proskynesis* before the new patriarch and each bishop, who all in turn granted him forgiveness. See D. Angelov, "The Confession of Michael VIII Palaiologos and King David," *JÖB* 56 (2006): 197. See also Macrides, "New Constantine" (n. 14 above), 17–21, and Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 44–45.

66 Macrides, "New Constantine," 26–28. D. Angelov, "Byzantine Imperial Panegyric as Advice Literature (1204–c. 1350)," in *Rhetoric in Byzantium: Papers from the Thirty-fifth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Exeter College, University of Oxford, March 2001*, ed. E. Jeffreys (Aldershot–Burlington, 2003), 56–57 and idem, *Imperial Ideology*, 38, reminds us that the position of rhetor had lapsed during the Laskarid period and was revived by Michael VIII in 1265 and with it the renewal of the annual imperial panegyrics, which were delivered at Christmas rather than Epiphany as they traditionally had been under the Komnenoi. See also Constantinides, *Higher Education in Byzantium* (n. 32 above), 50–53.

67 Macrides, "New Constantine," 28.

68 Ibid., 18 and n. 25, 30 and n. 92. Authors such as Theophylaktos of Ochrid and Nikephoros Blemmydes describe their own *logoi* as

gifts, which fulfill the function of annual imperial tribute according to Macrides, *ibid.*, 28–29. The tribute, therefore, functions on multiple levels: the visual representations themselves (the textiles), their afterlife in oral performance, and their textual recording.

69 Tantalizingly, Macrides, "New Constantine," 41, has suggested that because of the emphasis on textiles in the first encomium it may have been intended to accompany the installation of the *peplos* that Germanos commissioned for Hagia Sophia in 1265 that depicted Michael as "New Constantine." Along with the *peplos* depicting the Patriarchs Germanoi, the New Constantine silk was later altered in an act of *damnatio memoriae*. See T. Papamastorakis, "Tampering with History: From Michael III to Michael VIII," *BZ* 96, no. 1 (2003): 207–9.

70 Treu, *Orationes*, 1:47.25–31, and Siderides, "Μανουήλ Ὀλοβώλου," 189 (both n. 32 above): τί πρὸς τοῦτο τὸ ἔργον ὁ πέπλος ἐκεῖνος, ὃν ἱστούργουν Ἀθηναῖοι τῇ πολιᾷδι τούτων Παλλάδι καὶ τέχνῃ ποικιλικῇ λαμπροῖς ἐφάρμασσον βάμμασιν, ὧ μῦθοι τινες καὶ τερατεῖαι ἱστούργηγντο, γίγαντες βάλλοντες λίθους, εἰς οὐρανὸν καὶ βαλλόμενοι. Ζεὺς δὲ νεφεληγερέτης καὶ περπικέρανος κεραυνοβολῶν καὶ πληγὰς εἰσδεχόμενος. Ἀθηνᾶ τῷ πατρὶ συμμαχοῦσα καὶ μεγάλη κατὰ γιγάντων αἵρουσα τρόπαια. . .

FIG. 4 Detail of fig. 1, scene 5
(Byzantine emperor with the
archangel and Saint Lawrence).



(φάρμακον) and protector or averter (ἀποτρόπαιον). Despite the emphasis placed on the emperor's image in his verbal tribute, its power to protect and sate the foreign ambassadors' desire, the orator neglects to mention the imperial effigy at the very center of the *peplos*.⁷¹ The central scene on the upper register of the textile unmistakably depicts Michael Palaiologos being led to the church of Genoa by Saint Lawrence, the patron of the church and supposed protagonist of the hagiographic

71 Again, Holobolos specifies two textiles: one with the emperor's image and another with the life of Saint Lawrence and associated martyrs.

narrative (fig. 4).⁷² Despite its central position on the silk, the imperial image is embedded within the detailed hagiographic cycle, rendered in the same scale, and not separated by a framing device from the rest of the visual narrative.⁷³ The setting of this sacro-imperial

72 The Latin inscription, addressed at greater length below, precludes any ambiguity about the identity of the figures. Given the prominence of this central scene, the encomium's omission of the Byzantine emperor's portrait is particularly curious and will be discussed further below.

73 In its lack of formal divisions between scenes the format of the textile differs from iconostases such as, for example, the epistyle with the Miracles of Saint Eustratios, on which see the entry by N. Ševčenko in *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground: Icons from Sinai*, ed.

encounter, the architectural edifice identified as the church of Genoa, and hence the intended repository of the textile, is the largest formal element, but the triad of figures at the threshold of the building are of similar scale and on the same ground line as the actors of the hagiographic drama surrounding the central scene. Yet previous scholars, with the exception of Paribeni, have stressed the “autonomous function” of the contemporary imperial scene.⁷⁴ For Falcone it is detached from the other saintly scenes, while Johnstone has described it as an “irrelevant” interruption of the hagiographic narrative.⁷⁵ This position merits further consideration, for although the inclusion of the emperor’s image complicated the designers’ ability to create a legible hagiographic narrative, as we will see momentarily, the addition of the emperor in the central scene imbues the silk with precisely the sense of self-referentiality that permeates Byzantine panegyric. Michael being led to the cathedral of the saint whose martyrdom surrounds the image may be read as a symbol of alliance, a pictorialization of the pact between the two parties, and at the same time a strong assertion of Byzantine imperial ideology. In what follows, I examine the two narratives independently—first the hagiographic and then the imperial—and then consider how their combination articulates a unique image of imperial largesse designed for its particular diplomatic occasion.

Embroidered Hagiography

Holobolos designates the *peplos* given to the Genoese ambassadors as a book rather than a cloth.⁷⁶ This rhetorical characterization is apt in many ways, as the surviving textile in Genoa exhibits many pictorial conventions found commonly in illuminated manuscripts. In particular it employs continuous narration, where figures are repeated to suggest the unfolding of events in time. On the upper register the individual scenes are separated into two groups on either side of

the central image, that of the Byzantine emperor with the archangel and Saint Lawrence, and on the lower register they read continuously from the left to right edge of the cloth. The inclusion of the extra-hagiographic imperial scene constrained the designers’ ability to adapt the pictorial source material, which affected the sequencing of the scenes on the upper register. As a result, these scenes follow an unusual order: the story begins on the upper register with the five scenes on the right (along with the rightmost scene on the lower register), and then continues with the four scenes on the upper left. At the chronological beginning (scene six, directly to the right of the Genoese church), as the inscription makes clear, Sixtus commands Lawrence to distribute the belongings of the church (fig. 5).⁷⁷ Lawrence fulfills Sixtus’s orders in the next two scenes to the right (scenes seven and eight): he sells the church belongings and then he distributes the money from the sale to the poor (fig. 6).⁷⁸ In the last two scenes on the upper register (scenes nine and ten), we are shown Sixtus’s fate: he argues with Emperor Decius and then is decapitated (fig. 7).⁷⁹ His burial is depicted on the scene directly below this (scene twenty, the farthest scene on the lower right), so that the designers of the textile could accommodate the non-hagiographic contemporary imperial scene at the center of the upper register. The narrative continues on the far left of the cloth with the first scene, where Lawrence argues with Decius about what he had sold (fig. 8).⁸⁰ This scene mirrors that of Sixtus before the emperor (scene nine) both thematically and pictorially: both are scenes of confrontation in which the martyrs stand accused before the enthroned emperor debating the

R. S. Nelson and K. M. Collins (Los Angeles, 2006), 174–76 (cat. no. 21), and the elaborate cycle of frescoes in the church of St. Euphemia, to which the silk in Genoa is often compared. See Naumann and Belting, *Euphemia-Kirche* (n. 5 above), 150–51.

74 Paribeni, “Il pallio di San Lorenzo” (n. 5 above), 233–34.

75 Falcone, “Il ‘Pallio’ bizantino,” 339, and Johnstone, “Byzantine ‘Pallio,’” 106 (both n. 5 above).

76 See above, 161.

77 Pope Sixtus had made Lawrence archdeacon, and then, before being imprisoned by Roman authorities, he entrusted the church treasures to Lawrence with the instructions to then sell them and distribute the proceeds to the needy. The inscriptions are given by Siderides in “Πέπλος,” 376–78 (where there are a few errors); Parma Armani, “Nuove indagini,” 42; and Falcone, “Il ‘Pallio’ bizantino,” 343 n. 2 (all three n. 5 above). Scene six (upper register): s(anctus) XISTUS EP(i)s(copus) ROME / P(re)CIPIEN(s) s(anc)TO LAUR(entio) ARCHID/IAC(ono) DISPENSARE VASA / ECCLE(sie).

78 Scene seven: s(anctus) LAUR(entius) / VENUNDA(n)s / VASA EC/CLESIE. Scene eight: s(anctus) LAURENT(ius) P(e)CU(niam) VASO(rum) / Q(ue) VENDIDIT DISP(e)RGENS PAU/PERIBUS.

79 Scene nine: s(anctus) XISTUS DISPUTANS IM/PERATORI DECIO. Scene ten: s(anctus) XISTUS GLADIO CA/PITE AMPUTATUS.

80 Scene one: s(anctus) LAURENTI(us) DISPUTAN(s) IMPERA/TORI DECIO DE VASIS Q(ue) / VENDIDIT.



FIG. 5 Detail of fig. 1, scene 6 (Sixtus commanding Lawrence to distribute church vessels)



FIG. 6 Detail of fig. 1, scene 7 (Lawrence selling church vessels) and scene 8 (Lawrence distributing money to the needy)

ramifications of their actions. The Roman emperor demanded the return of the church treasures that Lawrence had sold within three days. In that time Lawrence gathered together the poor of the city and presented them to the emperor and said: "Behold the treasures of Christ's church." The textile conveys this in an abbreviated manner. In scene two Lawrence stands next to an ox-driven cart filled with people in simple tunics and the inscription verifies that indeed the martyr has brought the blind and the lame to the emperor

(fig. 8).⁸¹ As a result of this he was beaten, which is depicted in the next scene (scene three), and then imprisoned, as is seen in scene four (fig. 9).⁸² Thus the visual narrative on the upper register is structured in

81 Scene two: s(anctus) LAUR(entius) QUI OPPEREBAT VEICULIS / CLAUDOS ET CECOS QUIBUS DISP(ō)SIT / PRECIUM VASORUM AD IMPERATOREM.

82 Scene three: s(anctus) LAURENTI(u)s VAPULATUS. Scene four: s(anctus) LAURENTIUS IN CARCERE.



FIG. 7 Detail of fig. 1, scene 8 (continuation), scene 9 (Sixtus before Decius), and scene 10 (beheading of Sixtus)



FIG. 8 Detail of fig. 1, scene 1 (Lawrence before Decius) and scene 2 (Lawrence presenting to Decius the blind and the lame)



FIG. 9 Detail of fig. 1, scene 3 (Lawrence being beaten), scene 4 (Lawrence imprisoned), and scene 5 (Byzantine emperor with the archangel and Saint Lawrence)



FIG. 10 Detail of fig. 1, scene 11 (Lawrence caring for the needy) and scene 12 (Lawrence converting Tiburtius Callinicus)



FIG. 11 Detail of fig. 1, scene 13 (Lawrence baptizing Tiburtius Callinicus) and scene 14 (martyrdom of Lawrence)



FIG. 12 Detail of fig. 1, scene 15 (burial of Lawrence), scene 16 (Hippolytus before Decius), scene 17 (Hippolytus lacerated by hooks), and scene 18 (Hippolytus dragged by horses)



FIG. 13 Detail of fig. 1, scene 19 (burial of Hippolytus) and scene 20 (burial of Sixtus)

two segments surrounding the central image (scene 5) whose inclusion necessitated a shifting of Sixtus's burial to the lower register.

The narrative continues on the lower register, where it reads continuously from left to right in sequential order for the entire length of the silk (until the final scene of Sixtus's burial, that is). In the first scene on the lower left (scene eleven) Lawrence is shown imprisoned and caring for the sick. This is made clear by not only the inscription but also the architecture, which repeats the setting of the prison from scene four (fig. 10).⁸³ A scene of conversion follows in the twelfth and thirteenth scenes. The jailer, identified by the inscription as Tiburtius Callinicus, is depicted prostrate before the imprisoned Lawrence,⁸⁴ and in the next scene, he is baptized by the saint (figs. 10–11).⁸⁵ The fourteenth scene represents Lawrence's martyrdom on a bed of coals, and the fifteenth and central scene on the lower register depicts his burial by fellow martyr Hippolytus.⁸⁶ The remaining scenes, to the right of Lawrence's burial, concern Hippolytus. As a result of performing the

Christian burial for Lawrence, Hippolytus is shown before Decius in scene sixteen (as both Sixtus and Lawrence earlier). He is then tortured by laceration with metal hooks in scene seventeen, is dragged by wild horses in scene eighteen, and is finally buried in scene nineteen (figs. 12–13).⁸⁷ Thus the two scenes at the end of the silk depict separate burials of Hippolytus in scene nineteen and Sixtus in scene twenty (fig. 13).⁸⁸

While Lawrence is included in the *Synaxarion* of Constantinople, compiled in the late tenth century, the iconography of this saint is extremely rare in Byzantine art.⁸⁹ To be clear, portraits, as opposed to narrative

83 Scene eleven: s(anctus) LAUR(entius) CURANS IN CARCERE / OM(ne)s INFIRMOS AD EU(m) VENIE(n)TES.

84 Scene twelve: TIBURCIUS CALINICUS PRE(ce)PTOR / CARCERIS CREDENS IN CR(ist)O.

85 Scene thirteen: s(anctus) LAURENTIUS BAPTISANS / TIBURCIUM CALINICUS.

86 Scene fourteen: s(anctus) LAUR(entius) SARTAGINIBUS / IGNIS EXCENSI DEO SP(iritu)m / COM(m)ENDANS. Scene fifteen: s(anctus) YPOLITUS SEPEL/LIENS s(an)C(tu)m LAURENTIUM.

87 Scene sixteen: s(anctus) YPOLIT(us) DI/SPUTANS IMPE/RATORI DECIO. Scene seventeen: s(anctus) YPOLIT(us) UNGUIBUS / ENEIS LACERATUS. Scene eighteen: s(anctus) YPOLITUS P(er) EQUOS / FEROCES TRACTUS. Scene nineteen: s(anctus) YPOLITUS / SEPULTUS.

88 Scene twenty: s(anctus) XIST(us) / SEPULTUS.

89 Johnstone, "Byzantine 'Pallio'" (n. 5 above), 104–5, proposes the eleventh-century hagiographic collection compiled by John Xiphilinos as the hagiographic source for the textile. While Parma Armani follows Johnstone, both Falcone and Paribeni instead draw our attention to the Constantinopolitan synaxarion, on which see H. Delehay, ed., *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae: Propylaeum ad Acta SS Novembris* (Brussels, 1902) and A. Luzzi, *Studi sul Sinassario di Costantinopoli* (Rome, 1995), 34, where Lawrence is listed for 10 August. See Falcone, "Il 'Pallio' bizantino," 342, and Paribeni, "Il pallio di San Lorenzo," 234–36 (both n. 5 above). On the hagiographic tradition of Sixtus, Lawrence, and Hippolytus, see E. Follieri, "L'Epitome della *Passio* greca di Sisto, Lorenzo ed Ippolito BHG 977D: Storia di un testo del monologio al Sinassario," in *Βυζάντιον* (n. 11 above), 2:399–423; eadem,

scenes, abound in early and middle Byzantine monumental programs in Greece and Italy, for example, and on portable arts, such as the Fieschi-Morgan reliquary and the Pala d'Oro, both Constantinopolitan in origin.⁹⁰ Lawrence is included on the Menologion icon

"Sant'Ippolito nell'agiografia e nella liturgia bizantina," in *Ricerche su Ippolito (Studio Ephemeridis "Augustinianum"* 13) (Rome, 1977), 31–43. On Saint Lawrence's cult in Constantinople see J. Ebersolt, *Sanctuaires de Byzance: Recherches sur les anciens trésors des églises de Constantinople* (Paris, 1921), 87–88. Relics of Saint Lawrence were still in Constantinople in the later Byzantine period. Foreign visitors to the city identify the martyr's gridiron although, unlike Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo and Pero Tafur, a Russian source misidentifies the relic. See G. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington, DC, 1984), 230. In the early fifteenth century Manuel II Palaiologos sent to Martin of Aragon a number of relics, including a piece of the grill. For the letter, see Constantin Marinesco, "Manuel II Paléologue et les rois d'Aragon," *BSHAcRoum* 11 (1924): 1999, and for the larger context of this exchange, see H. Klein, "Eastern Objects and Western Desires: Relics and Reliquaries between Byzantium and the West," *DOP* 58 (2004): 311 and S. Mergiali-Sahas, "An Ultimate Wealth for Inauspicious Times: Holy Relics in Rescue of Manuel II Palaeologus' Reign," *Byzantion* 76 (2006): 274.

90 Lawrence, for example, appears in the west soffit at the Church of the Dormition in Daphni. In Sant'Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, Lawrence, alongside Hippolytus, is included among the twenty-six male saints shown in procession along the nave. The saintly figure in the lunette mosaics at the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna has often been identified as Lawrence but Vincent of Saragossa is a more likely candidate. See G. Mackie, "New Light on the So-Called Saint Lawrence Panel at the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna," *Gesta* 29 (1990): 54–60. At Cefalù, Lawrence is positioned next to Vincent of Saragossa, who holds a gridiron while Lawrence holds a cross and a book. In Palermo's Capella Palatina, half-length figures of Lawrence alongside Vincent of Saragossa are represented in the soffit of the north wall of the south chapel. At Monreale, Lawrence appears in deacon's vestments swinging a censer with one hand and holding a book in the other. A fourth-century glass vessel in the British Museum portrays Lawrence alongside Sixtus and Hippolytus. The tiny mid-fourteenth-century illustrated menologion in Oxford (Bodleian Library MS. Gr. th. f. 1) includes the saints for September and August with Lawrence and Hippolytus in the upper left quadrant of folio 51r. In this scene, Lawrence is represented on the far right looking to the left, where Sixtus anticipates his decapitation while Hippolytus is dragged by a horse in the foreground. See the recent facsimile with commentary, I. Hutter, *Menologion Bizantino de Oxford (Ms. Gr. Th. F. 1)* (Madrid, 2006). My thanks to Nancy Ševčenko for directing me to the commentary. The best-known image of Lawrence's passion is to be found in the crypt of Epiphanius at San Vincenzo al Volturno, where the frescoes are dated to the mid-ninth century. Here Decius leans down and gestures toward the saint who appears nude, bound, and with a halo on the grill as he is prodded by soldiers. For a survey of the wide range of Saint Lawrence iconography in Italy see the studies by G. Kaftal:

for August at Saint Catherine's monastery in Sinai, dated to around 1200,⁹¹ and he appears in a number of monumental painted calendar cycles documented by Pavle Mijović.⁹² In the earliest of the series, at Trnovo in Bulgaria, the lives of saints from various months, including Saint Lawrence, line the narthex of church of the Forty Martyrs, a royal foundation of 1230.

Unlike these portraits, however, more detailed narrative cycles of Lawrence's life and martyrdom are uncommon. On the lower half of an icon now in the Malcove collection in Toronto, Lawrence's martyrdom is elaborated more clearly (fig. 14).⁹³ Here the saint's condemnation and torture coalesce into a single scene of martyrdom: the roasting on a gridiron occupies the foreground as the seated emperor, along with other soldiers, observes from behind, and an angel reaches down from above. The events that proceed and follow this moment are omitted so as to focus on the martyrdom alone. A late twelfth-century German enamel plaque now in the Cleveland Museum of Art relies on a more sequential formal arrangement for the saint's *passio* (fig. 15).⁹⁴ On the left the enthroned Roman emperor raises

Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting (Florence, 1952), 614–23 (no. 182); *Iconography of the Saints in Central and South Italian Schools of Painting* (Florence, 1965), 663–79 (no. 219); *Iconography of the Saints in the Painting of North East Italy* (Florence, 1978), 587–98 (no. 168); and *Iconography of the Saints in the Painting of North West Italy* (Florence, 1985), 424–29 (no. 138).

91 He is pictured toward the right of the second row of the icon. See Nelson and Collins, *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground* (n. 73 above), 196–99 (cat. no. 31). Saint Lawrence is also included on the eleventh-century Sinai Menologion Diptych (cat. no. 30). See also N. Ševčenko, "Marking Holy Time: The Byzantine Calendar Icons," in *Byzantine Icons: Art, Technique and Technology*, ed. M. Vassilaki (Herakleion, 2002), 51–62.

92 P. Mijović, *Menolog: Istorijsko-Umetnička Istraživanja* (Belgrade, 1973). See the entries on Trnovo, 257, Nagoričino, 284, Gračanica, 303, and Peć, 375.

93 The upper half of the icon depicts the Virgin and Child flanked by Saints Francis and Anthony. The diversity of styles and iconographies of this work, both western and Byzantine, suggest a Crusader patron or audience. See S. D. Campbell, ed., *The Malcove Collection: A Catalogue of the Objects in the Lillian Malcove Collection of the University of Toronto* (Toronto, 1985), 245–46, and Evans, *Byzantium: Faith and Power* (n. 2 above), 482 (cat. 291) where it has been assigned a date in the early 1300s.

94 H. A. Klein, ed., *Sacred Gifts and Worldly Treasures: Medieval Masterworks from the Cleveland Museum of Art* (Cleveland, 2007), 142–43 (cat. 48). Paribeni, "Il pallio di San Lorenzo" (n. 5 above), 237, introduced another enamel of the interrogation of Saint Lawrence in Halle, which was originally part of the same original reliquary box. On



FIG. 14 Lower detail of panel with the Virgin and Child and the Martyrdom of Saint Lawrence, early 1300s, Malcove Collection, University of Toronto Art Centre, Toronto, Ontario, Catalogue Number 339, M82.119 (photo: Toni Hafkenscheid, University of Toronto Art Centre)

his hand to condemn Lawrence, who appears a second time, on the right-hand scene of martyrdom, where he is pictured on the gridiron as soldiers prod him. The two scenes share the same flat blue background and are not separated by a framing device. It is the repetition of the saint's body, clothed on the left and naked on the right but recognizable by the halo, that visually connects the two scenes, allowing the viewer to recognize cause and effect. This repetition of figures constitutes continuous narration, which is the primary mode of representation on the Saint Lawrence silk in Genoa. On the silk's upper register alone we follow the figure

of Lawrence, repeated eight times but in different combinations with Sixtus, Decius, Michael Palaiologos, and the poor and the lame. Throughout the textile, he is shown leading, selling and giving, being condemned, flogged, jailed, and grilled.⁹⁵

Lacking a strong Byzantine tradition for representing the saint's life, the designers of the textile drew on numerous pictorial traditions. The late eleventh-century copy of Barlaam and Ioasaph, Iveron 463, for example, offers a number of close formal parallels for the textile, in particular the use of repeated figures to suggest sequential progression of narrative.⁹⁶ The miniature on folio

the Halle plaque see H. L. Nickel, "Die Hallesche Laurentiustafel," *Bildende Kunst* 5 (1986): 223–25; idem, "Die Hallesche Laurentiustafel: Eine romanische Grubenschmelzplatte aus dem Stadtkernbereich," *Jahresschrift für mitteldeutsche Vorgeschichte* 71 (1988): 254–55. The depiction on the Halle enamel corresponds to scenes one and two on the textile in Genoa and the Cleveland enamel corresponds to the textile's fourteenth and first scenes.

95 In total Lawrence appears thirteen times on the textile. Sixtus appears four times in scenes six, nine, ten, and twenty. Hippolytus appears five times on the lower register, in scenes fifteen through nineteen. Tiburtius Callinicus appears twice in scenes twelve and thirteen.

96 S. M. Pelekanides et al., eds., *Treasures of Mount Athos* (Athens, 1974), 2:306–22 and figs., 53–132; A. A. Karakatsanis, ed., *Treasures of Mount Athos* (Thessaloniki, 1997), 212 (no. 5.15); H. C. Evans and



FIG. 15 Condemnation and Martyrdom of Saint Lawrence, Germany, Lower Saxony, ca. 1180, champlevé enamel and gilt copper, 9.6 × 20.8 cm, The Cleveland Museum of Art. Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund (photo: Cleveland Museum of Art)

5v depicting the Expulsion of the Christians provides a particularly close model for the scene of Hippolytus on the lower register of the Genoese textile, where the holy figure is lacerated with hooks, with hands raised in symmetrical arcs (fig. 16). Similarly folio 66v, depicting on the left a group of monks before the king, then the flogging of a monk farther to the right, offers a similar (and formulaic) sequence of condemnation to martyrdom that we encounter on the textile (fig. 17). The long linear narrative of the silk in Genoa may also immediately call to mind the Joshua roll, perhaps the best-known Byzantine instance of continuous narration, as well as the related group of Octateuch manuscripts.⁹⁷ While Johnstone introduced as a pictorial source for the textile's imagery the mid-twelfth-century Vatican 746, the Vatopedi 602 provides an even closer parallel, as it was

lavishly illustrated in the last quarter of the thirteenth century, perhaps for a member of the Palaiologan family.⁹⁸ The Octateuch tradition also raises questions about the relationship between early Palaiologan illumination and eleventh-century pictorial models, a question that has received attention recently from John Lowden.⁹⁹

It has long been assumed that the design of the textile in Genoa was based on eleventh-century models alone, a position complicated by Falcone and Paribeni, who have attempted to situate the silk within more contemporary thirteenth-century artistic trends.¹⁰⁰ Our

W. D. Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843–1261* (New York, 1997), 242–43 (cat. 164).

97 Ibid., 238–40 (cat. 162), and J. Lowden, *The Octateuchs: A Study in Byzantine Manuscript Illustration* (University Park, PA, 1992), esp. 105–19 on the relationship between the octateuchs and the Joshua Roll, and more recently Lowden, "Illustrated Octateuch Manuscripts: A Byzantine Phenomenon," in *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, ed. P. Magdalino and R. S. Nelson (Washington, DC, 2010), 107–52.

98 The detail of the oxen provides a close parallel for the second scene on the upper register of the textile in Genoa. See Karakatsanis, ed., *Treasures of Mount Athos*, 213 (no. 5.16); Pelekanides, *Treasures of Mount Athos*, 47–187; and Lowden, *Octateuchs*, 29–33. On Vatican 746, see *ibid.*, 26–28.

99 Lowden in Evans, *Byzantium: Faith and Power*, 259–66, and *idem*, "Illustrated Octateuch Manuscripts."

100 The most obvious pictorial models for the silk's design are the so-called menologion of Basil II and the "imperial" menologia. The eleventh-century Athos, Esphigmenou 14, also provides a particularly strong point of formal comparison for the silk, as Paribeni, "Il pallio di San Lorenzo," 236, and Johnstone, "Byzantine 'Pallio,'" 105 (both n. 5 above), have already pointed out. But both Falcone and Paribeni have introduced extensive comparanda in different media to situate the piece within more contemporary artistic trends. On Esphigmenou 14, see Pelekanides, *Treasures of Mount Athos*, 2:361–73.



FIG. 16 Barlaam and Ioasaph, folio 5v, Iveron cod. 463, ca. 1075–1125, The Holy Monastery of Iveron, Mount Athos (photo: Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University)



FIG. 17 Barlaam and Ioasaph, folio 66v, Iveron cod. 463, ca. 1075–1125, The Holy Monastery of Iveron, Mount Athos (photo: Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University)

understanding of Byzantine artistic development from the late Komnenian to the early Palaiologan period remains fairly obscure. Between the broadly defined “decorative style” manuscripts of the later twelfth century localized to Cyprus or Palestine and the later thirteenth-century Constantinopolitan manuscripts of the so-called Palaiologina group, for example, few securely dated illuminated codices survive.¹⁰¹ Even with many

101 Weyl Carr, *Byzantine Illumination*, provides the definitive study of the “decorative style” manuscripts. H. Buchthal, “Studies

in Byzantine Illumination of the Thirteenth Century,” *JbBM* 25 (1983): 27–102, placed a subgroup of manuscripts from the decorative style corpus in the first half of the thirteenth century and proposed a localization in Nicaea in part because of the perceived “high pretensions” or “imperial associations” of Dionysiou 4. Manuscript production between 1204 and 1261 has been studied by G. Prato, “La produzione libraria in area greco-orientale nel periodo del regno latino di Costantinopoli (1204–1261),” *Scrittura e Civiltà* 5 (1981): 105–47, repr. in *Studi di paleografia Greco* (Spoleto, 1994), 31–72. Prato notes that despite the elevated literary circles in the Empire of Nicaea, there is no evidence of manuscript production there. R. Nelson, “Paris. Gr. 117 and the Beginnings of Palaeologan

questions left unanswered regarding manuscript production in the years surrounding 1261, it is clear that the textile in Genoa employs pictorial formulae commonly found in manuscripts,¹⁰² but not exclusively, and it should be acknowledged that both the iconographic and pictorial sources exceed the illuminated page. Thirteenth-century vita icons typically surround central saintly effigies with detailed elaborations of the saints' trials and tortures, and monumental painting too preserves large-scale hagiographic cycles.

Regardless of precise pictorial and iconographic sources for the design, the silk in Genoa draws on typical Palaiologan embroidery traditions and thus offers a crucial link between pre- and post-conquest textiles—this despite the fact that it remains unique

Illumination," *WJKg* 37 (1984): 1–22, repr. in *Later Byzantine Painting: Art, Agency, and Appreciation* (Aldershot–Burlington, 2007), article VIII, has emphasized the importance of Paris 117, dated by colophon to 3 November 1262, as the "earliest dated examples of Palaeologan illumination." Despite the lack of manuscripts securely attributed to the period immediately before Paris 117, on the basis of comparison with monumental painting at Sopoćani and Peć, Nelson sees the miniatures as occupying an important transitional or anticipatory position within the teleology of Palaiologan painting, which would reach full fruition with the Byzantine recovery of Constantinople. On the ever-expanding group of manuscripts associated with the Palaiologina Group, so named because of the monogram on Vatican 1158, see H. Buchthal and H. Belting, *Patronage in Thirteenth-Century Constantinople: An Atelier of Late Byzantine Book Illumination and Calligraphy* (Washington, DC, 1978), and R. Nelson and J. Lowden, "The Palaeologina Group: Additional Manuscripts and New Questions," *DOP* 45 (1991): 59–68, repr. in Nelson, *Later Byzantine Painting*, article VII, which offers an updated survey of this "principal body of illuminated manuscripts from early Palaeologan Constantinople." K. Maxwell, "Paris, Bibliothèque National de France, Codex Grec 54: Modus Operandi of Scribes and Artists in a Palaiologan Gospel Book," *DOP* 54 (2002): 117–38, has considered carefully the scribal process of the famous unfinished bilingual New Testament and is currently preparing a monograph on the codex. Prato highlights the problems with attributing undated manuscripts during this time, especially to Nicaea, in "Produzione libraria," 71–72.

102 Vatopedi 602 and Iveron 5 offer the closest parallels to the textile in Genoa, but neither of these manuscripts is securely dated. On Iveron 5, see Karakatsanis, ed., *Treasures of Mount Athos*, 214 (no. 5.17), Pelekanides, *Treasures of Mount Athos*, 2:296–303 (both n. 96 above), and G. Galavaris, *Holy Monastery of Iveron: Illustrated Manuscripts* (Mount Athos, 2002). On the relationship between Iveron 5 and Paris 54 see Maxwell, "Paris, Bibliothèque National de France, Codex Grec 54," 120–22. Both Falcone, "Il 'Pallio' bizantino," 340, and Paribeni, "Il pallio di San Lorenzo," 238–39 (both n. 5 above) have noted the close stylistic relationship between the textile in Genoa and Iveron 5.

with respect to other extant Byzantine embroideries, which are almost entirely liturgical in function and imagery.¹⁰³ Perhaps the earliest surviving Byzantine embroideries are a pair of aers in Halberstadt Cathedral from the late twelfth century associated with Michael VIII's maternal grandfather, Alexios Palaiologos, that represent the Communion of the Apostles, the iconography found most frequently on chalice veils (fig. 18).¹⁰⁴ Scene eight on the silk in Genoa, where Lawrence holds out the church property, resembles this configuration of Christ as priest offering the chalice. The same program of the Communion of the Apostles is found on a fourteenth-century pair in the Collegiate Church of Castell'Arquato and on a single aer in the Benaki Museum in Athens.¹⁰⁵ This last example employs the same cross-in-circle motif that is scattered throughout the Genoese textile—a motif that has been described as the "hallmark" of Byzantine church embroidery.¹⁰⁶ The Genoese silk's cross-in-circle motif finds its closest parallel, however, not in the surviving aers but in *epitaphioi*, specifically the epitaphios in the National Historical Museum of Sofia, which includes an inscription naming Michael VIII's son Andronikos

103 Within the corpus of later Byzantine embroideries, the imagery in general relates to the liturgical function in a fairly straightforward manner, as, for example, the Communion of the Apostles appears most commonly on aers, the veils used to cover the chalice. See Woodfin in Evans, *Byzantium: Faith and Power* (n. 2 above), 295–96. A similar argument may be advanced for the textile in Genoa. In my reading the ideological message of the iconography of the silk relates directly to its function as a diplomatic gift. The imagery, it will be seen, underscores imperial generosity in a manner that echoes the concerns of the diplomatic exchange in which it was extended. Thus form and function in this instance too are intimately related.

104 They date to 1185–95 and were brought from Constantinople to Halberstadt in 1205, after the Fourth Crusade. See F. Dölger, "Die zwei byzantinischen 'Fahnen' im Halberstädter Domschatz," in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters* 3.2 (1935): 1351–60, and Johnstone, *Byzantine Tradition* (n. 2 above), 87 and 88, and, again, Woodfin in Evans, *Byzantium: Faith and Power*, 295–96.

105 The Collegiate Church of Castell'Arquato examples may be found in Johnstone, *Byzantine Tradition*, nos. 87 and 88; Millet, *Broderies religieuses* (n. 2 above), 72–73 and plates CLIV–CLV; and *Splendori di Bisanzio* (Milan, 1990), 204–5, where they are reproduced in color. For the Benaki piece, see Johnstone, *Byzantine Tradition*, no. 89, and Evans, *Byzantium: Faith and Power*, 310–11 (cat. 186).

106 Johnstone, "Byzantine 'Pallio'" (n. 5 above), 102.

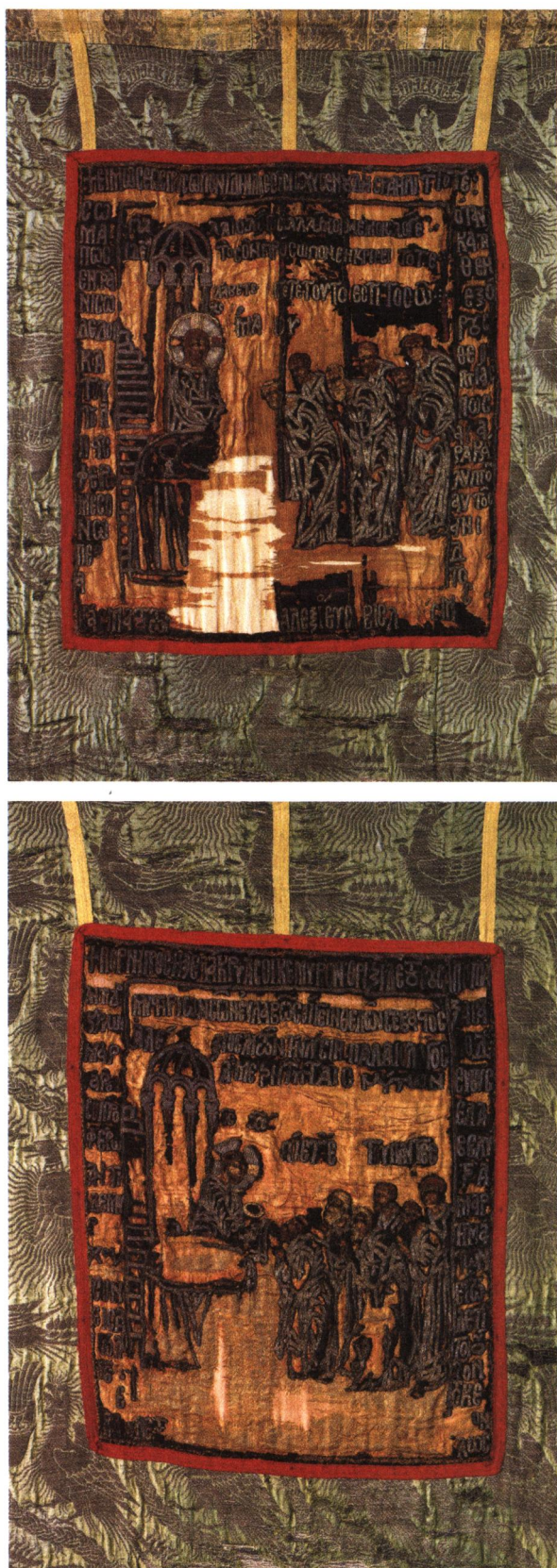


FIG. 18 Communion of the Apostles, Pair of Aers, 1185–95, Cathedral Treasury, Halberstadt, Germany (photo: Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Archäologie Sachsen-Anhalt, Juraj Lipták)

Palaiologos (fig. 19).¹⁰⁷ Covering nearly every blank space of the design, small Greek crosses within circles resemble regularized stamps imprinted on the cloth. Although this motif is identical to the one found on the silk in Genoa, its arrangement is less haphazard on the epitaphios. A more seemingly random arrangement of crosses appears on an *epigonation* depicting the Anastasis in the Byzantine Museum in Athens that is assigned to the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century (fig. 20).¹⁰⁸ Here, as in the Genoese silk, the stamplike circle-crosses are cut off by the embroidered figural imagery in many places.

Although no internal framing device separates individual episodes of the story, a delicate foliate pattern forms a single frame along the outer edge of the silk in Genoa, and this too finds parallels in extant Palaiologan textiles. The Athens *epigonation* employs a similar vine rinceaux frame (although much abraded).¹⁰⁹ It also appears on the fourteenth-century Vatican *sakkos*, a liturgical vestment entirely different in most respects from the Genoese textile but bearing important similarities in its embroidery motifs (fig. 21).¹¹⁰ Like the Genoese textile and the Athens *epigonation*, the surface of the *sakkos* appears to be scattered almost randomly with the cross-in-circle motif, and in places some of these elements are cut off by edges of the

107 See Johnstone, *Byzantine Tradition* (n. 2 above), 117; Millet, *Broderies religieuses*, 89–94 and plates CLXXVII, CXCII; V. Pace, *Treasures of Christian Art in Bulgaria* (Sofia, 2001), 210; and Evans, *Byzantium: Faith and Power*, 314–15 (cat. 188).

108 Johnstone, *Byzantine Tradition*, no. 51, and Evans, *Byzantium: Faith and Power*, 304–5 (cat. 180).

109 Inscriptions constitute the frame of the Halberstadt and Benaki aers. The Castell'Arquato aers are ornamental (one rectilinear and one curvilinear). The frame of the Saint Clement *epitaphios* comprises foliate interlocking circle-in-square motifs, similar to the *epitaphios* of King Stefan Uroš II Milutin that was made in Serbia, ca. 1300, on which see *ibid.*, 315 (cat. 189).

110 Johnstone, *Byzantine Tradition*, figs. 1–6; Millet, *Broderies religieuses*, 67, plates CXXXV–CLI; *idem*, *La dalmatique du Vatican* (Paris, 1945); and Evans, *Byzantium: Faith and Power*, 300–301 (cat. 177).



FIG. 19 Epitaphios, 1282–1328, National History Museum, Sofia, Bulgaria (29231) (photo: Bruce White © The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

main figural embroidery. Moreover, the pattern of the lower hem area—delicate tendrils encircling crosses set within a thin foliate frame—closely resembles the Genoese silk's rinceaux pattern.

The textile in Genoa, therefore, despite its unusual iconography, participates in the late Byzantine embroidery tradition by virtue of the scattered cross-in-circle motif and its frame decoration. But the embroidery technique sharply differs with respect to both the inscription and the figural imagery. For the figures, the work follows typical Byzantine embroidery methods by using couched metal thread for every aspect of the design, save the flesh parts, which are worked in silk.¹¹¹ Yet the inscriptions mark a significant departure from traditional

111 Johnstone has handled the technical aspects of the textile's production and Parma Armani, "Nuove indagini" (n. 5 above), 31, offers a thorough summary of its condition. The silk underwent a significant restoration campaign in 1948–50 but little documentation of this survives. As mentioned at the beginning of this article, the textile is currently undergoing a thorough conservation campaign in Florence.



FIG. 20 Anastasis Epigone, 14th century, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens (T. 714) (photo: Bruce White © The Metropolitan Museum of Art)



FIG. 21 Sakkos, 14th century, Museo del Tesoro, Capitolo Vaticano S. Pietro, Città del Vaticano (photo: Scala/Art Resource, NY)

embroidery customs. Unlike typical Byzantine inscriptions, where thread is laid horizontally across the strokes of the letters, in this instance the thread follows their contours.¹¹² In this way the inscriptions, beyond the obvious fact that they are Latin rather than Greek, differ from other Byzantine textiles. Moreover, the inscriptions appear to have been embroidered after the main figural imagery. The letter scale changes from scene to scene in order to accommodate the amount of space allotted by the imagery, in some instances less successfully than others. In the central scene on the upper register, for example, the letters conform to the shape of the church domes, while the inscriptions of the two scenes in the lower right corner are awkwardly spaced with regard to both each other and their corresponding

imagery. In all probability, the inscriptions were executed by a western-trained artist, a position originally put forth by Johnstone and followed by all subsequent scholars. Again, the design draws on well-established embroidery techniques and pictorial conventions found in other media, but also exhibits particularities that are highly unusual. The most significant idiosyncrasy, however, is the configuration of the central scene, the contemporary imperial image that is both integrated within and interrupts the hagiographic narrative.

*The Emperor, Archangel, and Saint
at the Doors of Genoa's Church*

Initially, the design of the silk appears to join two entirely separate and distinct genres: a hagiographic story told in linear sequence and a single symbolic imperial event, a potential church entrance. In the central scene on the upper register, the emperor, archangel, and

112 Johnstone, "Byzantine 'Pallio'" (n. 5 above), 102, and Paribeni "Il pallio di San Lorenzo," 235 with further thoughts on the script itself.

saint stand at the threshold of the church of Genoa and gesture toward its closed doors. The emperor, of course, never physically set foot on Genoese soil and hence never entered the church of San Lorenzo. In this sense the image is analogous to the sixth-century mosaic cycle in the sanctuary of San Vitale in Ravenna, where the celebrated portraits of Justinian and Theodora visually stand in for the imperial couple in the church's liturgical celebration. In both instances, the imperial image acts as a surrogate for the person portrayed and, further, it constitutes the organizing principle for the larger iconographic program. At San Vitale the theme of gift-giving, the chalice carried by Theodora and the paten by Justinian, ties together the broader narrative of sacrifice and offering elaborated in the larger iconographic program of the ritual space. On the silk in Genoa, giving also governs the overall design. Here the emperor's image substitutes for the historic event for which the textile was created—the diplomatic treaty that was conducted in the hopes of regaining the occupied Byzantine capital. The privileged central position of this scene and its placement along the vertical axis directly above Saint Lawrence's burial mark it formally as the pivotal episode. The church is the largest formal element on the textile and the apex of its dome extends to the upper frame of the textile.

The lengthy inscription, which follows the contours of the architecture, identifies the figures, action, and setting of this pivotal scene: "Saint Lawrence leads the Most High Emperor of the Greeks Lord Michael Doukas Angelos Komnenos Palaiologos into the church of Genoa."¹¹³ Each of the figures is distinguished by a halo. Saint Lawrence stands closest to the doors of the church. He gestures toward the church's doors with one hand and with the other he clasps the wrist of the imperial figure on the left—he leads, as the inscription states. The emperor is recognizable by a gemmed crown and *loros*, which according to Byzantine custom wraps around his body and over his left arm, the arm by which he is being led by the saint. The bulk of the inscription elaborates the emperor's nomenclature, highlighting the illustrious families from which he claimed descent. This is not unusual, but he is described

as Greek Emperor (*Imperator Grecorum*) rather than the (Byzantine) standard Emperor of the Romans (ὁ βασιλεὺς Ῥωμαίων). Moreover, while the inscription names only two figures—the saintly and the imperial—a third is portrayed: the archangel, beardless, unlike the other two figures, standing behind and between Lawrence and Michael, his hand visible on the emperor's right shoulder and his wings extending beyond the emperor, framing him.¹¹⁴

Another ambiguity involves the depiction of the sacred space. The inscription leaves no doubt about the identity of the structure, but its depiction is much more in keeping with Byzantine than Italian traditions. That the designers of the cloth rendered the Italian church according to Byzantine architectural conventions with which they were familiar seems logical. They would not have been expected to know the distinctive striped façade of the Romanesque basilica of San Lorenzo, and, after all, in Nicaea inspiration could be drawn from Byzantine churches, including a number of thirteenth-century structures that are praised in *ekphraseis*.¹¹⁵ But given the unprecedented configuration of the textile's design, it is worth lingering on the setting of this scene before pursuing the action taking place at its doors, which constitutes a wholly original visualization of imperial intercession.

By contrast with the other architectural edifice represented on the textile—the prison with its pitched roof and triangular pediment, directly to the left of the central scene (in scene 4) and in the lower left two episodes (in scenes 11 and 12)—the church at

114 While Parma Armani, "Nuove indagini," 37, qualified the identification of the archangel as Michael with a question mark, there is no doubt about the identity of the figure despite the fact that he is not named explicitly in the inscription. The emperor Michael and his eponymous archangel appear together on the most significant artistic commissions of the day: the lost bronze monument erected in front of the Church of the Holy Apostles and on his coinage (see discussion below). Curiously, the archangel, situated perfectly between and behind the two figures, is present in upper body alone. This is evident especially when examining the reverse of the textile, where a third pair of feet and lower garb is missing. On the issues at stake in the representation of angels, see G. Peers, *Subtle Bodies: Representing Angels in Byzantium* (Berkeley, 2001).

115 H. Buchwald, "Lascarid Architecture," *JÖB* 28 (1979): 261–96; C. Foss, *Nicaea: A Byzantine Capital and Its Praises* (Brookline, MA, 1996); and C. Pinatsi, "New Observations on the Pavement of the Church of Hagia Sophia in Nicaea," *BZ* 99, no. 1 (2006): 119–26, who offers an important redating of the pavement mosaics to the early thirteenth century.

113 Scene five (upper register): s(anctus) LAU(rentius) INDUCE(n)S ALTIS/SIMUM IMP(er)ATOREM GRE/CO(rum) D(omi)-N(u)M MICH(ae)L(em) DUCA(m) / ANG(e)L(u)M CO(m)NENU(m) PALEO/LOGU(m) IN ECC(les)IAM IAN(uensem or uae or uensium).



FIG. 22 Constantinople, Vat. gr. 1851, fol. 2r, late 12th century (photo: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana)

the center of the textile resembles a centrally planned Byzantine sacred structure.¹¹⁶ The building is arranged

to emphasize its entrance, similar to the miniature of Constantinople preserved in Vatican manuscript 1851 (fig. 22).¹¹⁷ Putting the viewer at a slightly elevated

116 The embroidered church may be compared to the painted architectural model represented in the hands of Peter on the interior of the church of San Lorenzo, a fresco cycle produced around 1312. On these frescoes see R. Nelson, "A Byzantine Painter in Trecento Genoa: The Last Judgment at S. Lorenzo," *ArtB* 67, no. 4 (1985): 458–566; Di Fabio, *Cattedrale di Genova* (n. 5 above); and R. Nelson, "Byzantine Icons in Genoa before the *Mandylion*," in *Intorno al Sacro Volto: Genova, Bisanzio e il Mediterraneo (secoli XI–XIV)*, ed. A. R. Calderoni Masetti, C. Dufour Bozzo, and G. Wolf (Venice, 2007), 79–92. On the depiction of architectural models

held in hands of saints and patrons see note 120 below. Also relevant to the discussion is S. Ćurčić, *Architecture as Icon: Perception and Representation of Architecture in Byzantine Art* (Princeton–New Haven, 2010).

117 Also like the textile in Genoa, this illuminated manuscript was custom-created as a gift for a foreign audience. The book, however, was made for a foreign princess arriving in Constantinople to marry the heir to the throne of Byzantium. See Hilsdale, "Constructing a Byzantine Augusta: A Greek Book for a French Bride," *ArtB* 87, no. 3

vantage point, the manuscript depiction aligns the great bronze doors, the ceremonial entrance to the city, with the entrance to the Great Church, crowned by an immense tympanum and domed roof pierced by windows. The embroidery similarly stresses the great doors of the church, which are framed by rising tympana, windows, and dome. It is toward these doors that the emperor, archangel, and saint are processing; the imperial and saintly figures even gesture toward them. The sacred building stands for the city of Genoa, and is positioned to emphasize its threshold—in other words, to emphasize potentiality and liminality.¹¹⁸ There may well also be a fluidity of associations at play here: just as it represents San Lorenzo, standing for Genoa, it may also allude to Hagia Sophia, metonym for Constantinople, whose restoration to Byzantine rule was the objective of the treaty for which the textile was created.

While the unique image of the emperor being led by Saint Lawrence to the doors of San Lorenzo relates ultimately to the larger message of the textile as a whole, there are Byzantine art historical precedents for the clasping of wrists and the leading of figures. In terms of religious iconography, scenes of the Anastasis present relatively consistent conventions for the clasping of wrists, although they exhibit a more pronounced sense of dynamism and urgency than the calm procession-like tone of the central scene of the textile in Genoa.¹¹⁹ On one of the twelfth-century enamels of the Pala d'Oro now in San Marco, but originally from the Pantokrator monastery in Constantinople, Christ strides to the right, trampling a shackled Hades, and looks back as he grabs Adam by the wrist to pull him up out of the tomb (fig. 23). In the central scene of the textile, Saint Lawrence moves toward the church on the right—his body is turned ever so slightly in that direction along

with his feet, and his left hand gestures there—and yet his head is crooked back to the left (echoing the much sharper crook of the archangel's head) toward the eastern emperor, whom he clasps by the wrist. Even though the saint's position lacks the drama of Christ in scenes of the Anastasis, such as on the Pala d'Oro or the Athens Epigonation (fig. 20), it subtly echoes such a pose. One of the most significant departures from the Anastasis depictions, however, lies in the scale of the three figures: the emperor on the silk appears the same size and on the same grounding as the sacred figure who holds his wrist and leads him to the right.

Images of intercession and donation provide the closest model for the central scene's arrangement. It is in this pictorial context that we find the close contiguity of holy figures and living patrons or donors most frequently.¹²⁰ Two images in particular, which have been brought together by Nancy Ševčenko as examples of the close encounter between holy figures and

(2005): 458–83, and for an alternate dating C. J. Hennessy, "A Child Bride and Her Representation in the Vatican *Epithalamion*," *Cod. Gr. 1851*, *BMGS* 30, no. 2 (2006): 115–50.

118 On the importance of the threshold to imperial ceremony, the liminal narthex zone and imperial doors of Hagia Sophia in particular, see chapter three, "Ceremonial and Memory," of G. Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2003), 84–114. Again, the central scene's potential entrance bears associations of church union and has been related to the unionist agenda that marked Michael's reign.

119 The principal study on the iconography of the Anastasis is A. Kartsonis, *Anastasis: The Making of an Image* (Princeton, 1986).

120 The subject of portraits and donation has been surveyed by A. Stylianou and J. A. Stylianou, "Donors and Dedicatory Inscriptions, Supplicants and Supplications in the Painted Churches of Cyprus," *JÖBG* 9 (1960): 97–128; S. Kalopissi-Verti, *Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor Portraits in Thirteenth-Century Churches of Greece* (Vienna, 1992); L. Rodley, "Patron Imagery from the Fringes of the Empire," in *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider: Papers from the Thirty-second Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton, March 1998*, ed. D. C. Smythe (Aldershot, 2000), 163–78; C. Jäggi, "Donator oder Fundator? Zur Genese des monumentalen Stifterbildes," in *Georges-Bloch-Jahrbuch des Kunsthistorischen Instituts der Universität Zürich* 9–10 (2002–3): 27–45. Nancy P. Ševčenko and Annemarie Weyl Carr have examined most fully the self-referentiality of votive images with donor portraits. See N. Ševčenko, "Close Encounters: Contact between Holy Figures and the Faithful as Represented in Byzantine Works of Art," in *Byzance et les images: Cycle de conférences organisé au musée du Louvre par le Service culturel du 5 octobre au 7 décembre 1992*, ed. J. Durand and A. Guillou (Paris, 1994), 255–85; eadem, "The Representation of Donors and Holy Figures on Four Byzantine Icons," *ΔΧΑΕ*, ser. 4, 17 (1993–94): 157–64; and A. Weyl Carr, "Donors in the Frames of Icons: Living in the Borders of Byzantine Art," *Gesta* 45, no. 2 (2006): 189–98. For the later Byzantine period in particular see the surveys by T. Velmans, "Le portrait dans l'art des Paléologues," in *Art et société à Byzance sous les Paléologues: Actes du Colloque organisé par l'Association internationale des études byzantines à Venise en septembre 1968* (Venice, 1971), 93–148, and H. Belting, "Die Auftraggeber der spätbyzantinischen Bildhandschrift," in the same volume, 151–76, as well as the recent studies by T. Kambourova: "Pouvoir et prière dans les images byzantines de don," *RESEE* 46 (2008): 135–50, and "Ktitor: le sens du don des panneaux votifs dans le monde byzantin," *Byzantion* 78 (2008): 261–87.



FIG. 23 Anastasis, Pala d'Oro, 12th century, San Marco, Venice (photo: Cameraphoto Arte, Venice/Art Resource, NY)

the faithful, merit closer scrutiny.¹²¹ In monumental form at Mileševa, on the south wall of the Church of the Ascension painted around 1235, prince Vladislav is depicted being led to Christ by the Virgin (fig. 24).¹²² Christ sits on the left and gestures in acknowledgement toward the pair approaching from the right, first the Virgin, then the prince, who holds a model of the church with his left hand, his right wrist clasped by the

Virgin, just as the Palaiologan emperor's left is clasped by Saint Lawrence. A mid- to late thirteenth-century Gospel book in the Iveron monastery on Mount Athos similarly depicts intercession and donation (fig. 25).¹²³ On the recto of folio 457, the donor, identified as John, holds a book in his left hand. His right is clasped by the Virgin, who leads him to the left, where across the page the enthroned Christ raises his hand in a gesture of speech while John Chrysostom stands close behind

121 Ševčenko, "Close Encounters," 255–85.

122 On Mileševa see G. Babić, "Le portrait du roi Vladislav en fondateur dans le naos de l'église de Mileševa," in *Mileševa u istoriji srpskog naroda: Međunarodni naučni skup povodom sedam i po vekova postojanja; juni 1985*, ed. V. J. Đurić (Belgrade, 1987), 9–16, with bibliography.

123 Iveron 5, folios 456v–457r. On Iveron 5 see note 102 above. On the donor image of Iveron 5 in particular see Ševčenko, "Close Encounters," 273; Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* (Leiden, 1976), 84–87; Belting, *Das illuminierte Buch in der spätbyzantinischen Gesellschaft* (Heidelberg, 1970), 35–37.



FIG. 24 Vladislav led to Christ by the Virgin, Church of the Ascension, Mileševa, ca. 1235 (photo: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY)

recording the encounter on a long scroll. The legalistic tone of this scene of intercession closely resembles the protocol of imperial petition, where court intermediaries would negotiate contact between humble suppliant and supplicated emperor.¹²⁴

A similar mapping of contemporary court protocol onto a visual program has been observed by Robert Nelson in the “Enrollment for Taxation” scene of the early fourteenth-century narthex mosaics of the Chora Monastery (Kariye Camii) in Constantinople, where the scene of biblical tax collection, in part, adopts

conventions of a contemporary imperial audience (fig. 26).¹²⁵ In both scenes, the authority figure (Cyrenius at the Chora, Christ in Iveron 5) is accompanied by a scribe. At the Chora, costume assists the viewer in making the associations between contemporary courtly and biblical worlds. But in scenes of intercession, earthly and divine figures appear together in the same composition either within the same pictorial space as in the Mileševa fresco or across the page from one another as in Iveron 5. Moreover, on the Iveron manuscript and the textile in Genoa, sacred and earthly figures are brought into analogy through name. John Chrysostom,

124 See Belting, *Das illuminierte Buch*, 36, and H. Hunger, “Die Herrschaft des ‘Buchstabens’: Das Verhältnis der Byzantiner zu Schrift- und Kanzleiwesen,” *ΔΧΑΕ* 12 (1984): 37.

125 R. S. Nelson, “Taxation with Representation: Visual Narrative and the Political Field of the Kariye Camii,” *Art History* 22, no. 1 (1999): 56–82.



FIG. 25 Christ with John Chrysostom and the Virgin with John; folios 456v–457r, Iveron cod. 463, ca. 1075–1125, The Holy Monastery of Iveron, Mount Athos (photo: Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University)

who acts as scribe in the Iveron codex, records Christ's words of blessing for the earthly John. And on the textile the emperor Michael is embraced by his archangelic namesake—the leader of the heavenly hosts sanctions the union of the earthly leader of Byzantium and Saint Lawrence's church.

In these intercession scenes contemporary donors interact with sacred figures. As on the textile in Genoa, the donors are led by the wrist. These scenes also exhibit precisely the same self-referential logic as does the textile. John, the *ktetor* of the Iveron manuscript, holds in his hand the codex that stands as a smaller representation of the larger book whose very pages contain the image itself. Similarly, Vladislav holds in his hand the church that bears his representation. Michael too is depicted in front of the church that is intended to be the repository of the very textile woven with his portrait. But the silk exhibits displacement: Michael is the patron not of San Lorenzo but of the textile destined

for that church. Michael's image, therefore, functions as a donor scene despite the fact that his gift is not depicted literally in his hand. His gift is the very silk, a gift intimately bound with the diplomatic circumstances of its creation. The textile both commemorates and participates in this diplomatic exchange.¹²⁶

The scene of intercession at the center of the piece, which is the nexus of the whole program, differs profoundly from other scenes of intercession. The earthly figure, the emperor, despite his being led rather than leading, is not reduced in scale; and he shares the pictorial space of the sacred figures entirely.¹²⁷ Moreover, he

126 This self-referential logic of donation is consistent with donor figures on Byzantine icons, which, Ševčenko has argued, "reenact the donation" rather than merely record it. The icon, Ševčenko states, "Representation of Donors," 157, "is both the commemoration of the gift and the very gift itself."

127 In the funerary context, the archangel Michael acts as mediator for the deceased in the tomb of John I Angelos Komnenos



FIG. 26 Enrollment for Taxation, Chora Monastery (Kariye Camii), ca. 1316–21, Constantinople (photo: Dumbarton Oaks, Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC)

is being led toward the doors of the church, not toward a holy entity, thus presenting a fundamentally locative scene of intercession. Moreover, the emperor is distinctly pictured as part of a triad. The combination of triad and clasped wrists echoes early Byzantine scenes of marital union, in particular that of the gesture of the *dextrarum iunctio*—perhaps this is not surprising, considering that Holobolos's encomium employed the metaphor of the lover and beloved for the Genoese

Doukas (d. 1289) at the Panagia Monastery, Porta (Pyle). There he clasps the deceased by the wrist and leads him to the seated Virgin and Child, but the archangelic figure is noticeably larger in scale than the earthly figure. See S. T. Brooks, "Poetry and Female Patronage in Late Byzantine Tomb Decoration: Two Epigrams by Manuel Philes," *DOP* 60 (2006): 235 and figs. 5–6.

ambassadors and the emperor in order to underscore the potential power of the imperial image. In addition to a series of rings bearing this imagery, a marriage belt at Dumbarton Oaks depicts the bride and groom with hands clasped in front of Christ, who presides over the joining of hands (fig. 27).¹²⁸ Ernst Kantorowicz has examined the development of this imagery from pre-Christian scenes of union, elaborating how the images take on a quasi-legal valence, with Christ in the position of *concordia pronuba* witnessing and sanctioning the union.

The tripartite arrangement of *pronuba* and *dextrarum iunctio* seen in early marital iconography does not present an exact match for the central scene on the Genoese textile—for one, the thirteenth-century emperor's left wrist is clasped, not his right—but there are some common formal and thematic echoes that make marital union a fitting model for the visualization of a diplomatic pact. Gary Vikan has pointed out that the supervisory role of Christ in scenes of *dextrarum iunctio* is emphasized by his close physical contact with the couple in order to suggest blessing. On nearly all of the series of rings with *dextrarum iunctio* imagery, he writes, "Christ appears to be touching the couple, either on the shoulders, the hands, or the head."¹²⁹ On the textile, the *pronuba* position is occupied by the archangel. His hand rests intimately on the Byzantine emperor's shoulder in this scene of union, constituting a gesture of assent, support, and sanction.

The close association of the emperor and the archangel is a consistent feature of images of the first

128 E. H. Kantorowicz, "On the Golden Marriage Belt and the Marriage Rings of the Dumbarton Oaks Collection," *DOP* 14 (1960): 1–16; I. Kalavrezou, ed., *Byzantine Women and Their World* (Cambridge–New Haven, 2003), 229–30 (cat. 131); G. Bühl, ed., *Dumbarton Oaks: The Collections* (Washington, DC, 2008), 108–9. See also G. Vikan, "Art and Marriage in Early Byzantium," *DOP* 44 (1990): 145–63, esp. 161–62. A similar piece also exists in the Louvre, see Musée du Louvre, *Byzance*, 133–34 (cat. no. 89). On one of the seventh-century silver plates in Cyprus known as the David Plates, we encounter a similar configuration among Old Testament figures. Under a stylized classical architectural backdrop with offerings placed in the foreground, Saul presides over the marriage of his daughter Micah to David. See R. E. Leader, "The David Plates Revisited: Transforming the Secular in Early Byzantium," *ArtB* 82, no. 3 (2000): 407–27 followed by R. Leader-Newby, *Silver and Society in Late Antiquity: Functions and Meanings of Silver Plate in the Fourth to Seventh Centuries* (Aldershot–Burlington, 2003).

129 Vikan, "Art and Marriage," 160 n. 115.



FIG. 27 Marriage Belt with Bridal Couple and Christ, 6th to 7th century, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington DC (photo: Dumbarton Oaks)

Palaiologan emperor. Not surprisingly, the Genoese ambassadors of Holobolos's speech explicitly address Michael as an angel. "You are an Angel, an Angel of Light, a Benevolent Angel (ἄγγελος ἀγαθός)," they intone, as they implore him to be their helmsman.¹³⁰ The *Typikon* for the Monastery of the Archangel Michael on Mount Auxentios expresses a close personal relationship between Michael and his archangelic namesake. The emperor claims to have been "rescued" on a number of occasions "through the ministry of the leader of the immaterial beings, Michael, whom, from God and after God, I have been fortunate to have as the vigilant guardian of my life in the midst of many dan-

gers, many precarious and fearsome situations, some originating within [the empire] while others were due to external forces. He came to my assistance in time of war and gloriously took me to his side. Many times he led me to victory over both domestic and foreign foes."¹³¹

Moreover, at some point after the successful Byzantine restoration of Constantinople, Michael had erected in front of the Church of the Holy Apostles a monumental bronze sculptural group that featured the emperor at the feet of the archangel Michael offering him a model of the imperial city.¹³² The monumen-

130 Treu, *Orationes*, 1:46.16–17; Siderides, "Μανουήλ Ὀλοβόλου," 189 (both n. 32 above). Many of Holobolos's orations, including those composed to accompany the *prokypsis* ceremony, include angelic imagery. See, for example, J. F. Boissonade, *Anecdota Graeca e codicibus regiis* (Hildesheim, 1962), 5:167, 173–75. In emphasizing the assimilation of the imperial and the angelic in the thirteenth century, Henry Maguire, in "The Heavenly Court," in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204* (Washington, DC, 1997), 258, repr. in *Image and Imagination*, article XI, points out that the "angelic emperor was a topos, but not an unchanging one" in verbal and visual rhetoric.

131 *BMFD*, 3:1215–16 (trans. Dennis)

132 This no longer extant monument is mentioned by Pachymeres as well as later foreign travelers to the city and is even included in the illustrations of a few copies of Cristoforo Buondelmonti's *Liber archipelagi insularum*. See A.-M. Talbot, "The Restoration of Constantinople under Michael VIII," *DOP* 47 (1993): 258–60; T. Thomov, "The Last Column in Constantinople," *BSI* 59 (1998): 83; J. Durand, "À propos du grand groupe en bronze de l'archange saint Michel et de l'empereur Michel VIII Paléologue à Constantinople," in *La sculpture en occident: études offertes à Jean-René Gaborit* (Dijon, 2007), 47–57; and N. Ševčenko, "The Portrait of Theodore Metochites at Chora," forthcoming in the acts of the conference "Donation et donateur dans la société et l'art byzantins," organized



FIG. 28 Gold *hyperpyron* of Michael VIII Palaiologos, Constantinople, post-1261 (47.2.134) (photo: Dumbarton Oaks)

tal image constitutes an offering to the archangel of the city reconquered in his name, for whose reconquest the textile in Genoa was created and extended as a diplomatic gift. In the textile Michael appears embraced by the same archangel, under the protection of his wings—a symbolically sanctioned union with the Genoese that would enable the restoration of the imperial city, which, years later in the bronze monument, is then shown given to the archangel in thanksgiving.

The emperor and the archangel appear together with the city on Michael VIII's new gold *hyperpyra*, struck after the restoration of Constantinople. The obverse depicts the Virgin surrounded by the city walls, an image inspired by the Byzantine restoration of the imperial capital, and the reverse shows the emperor on knee being presented to Christ by his saintly namesake (fig. 28).¹³³ He is not depicted clasped by the wrist;

rather, his hands gesture in supplication to the right, toward the seated Christ, who touches the emperor's head in a gesture that implies blessing, coronation, and legitimate imperial authority. While the combination of the obverse imagery of the Virgin of the walls with the reverse of the emperor with the archangel and Christ begins after the Byzantine restoration of the imperial capital, to celebrate explicitly the return of the Virgin's favor to the city, this same reverse iconography was first struck in Nicaea, mint for the empire of Nicaea (fig. 29).¹³⁴ The iconography of the reverse, therefore, is contemporary with the textile in Genoa. This coincidence indicates that the emperor alongside the archangel was a well-established trope in Nicaea, and that their relationship was portrayed as close and intimate.

The coin and the central scene of the textile share another key element. The emperor occupies a seemingly humble position on each—he is shown kneeling and being led by the wrist—and yet this humility serves as a means of expressing power. At the same time as he adopts a gesture or position of apparent humility, the emperor

by Jean-Michel Spieser and Elisabeth Yota at the University of Fribourg in March 2008. I thank the author for sharing this work with me in advance of its publication.

133 *DOC* 5.2: nos. 2–25; C. Morriison, "L'hyperpère de Michel VIII Paléologue et la reconquête de Constantinople," *Le Club français de la Médaille, Bulletin* 55–56 (1977): 76–86; and A. Cutler, *Transfigurations: Studies in the Dynamics of Byzantine Iconography* (University Park, PA, 1975), 111–41. C. Morriison, "The Emperor, the Saint, and the City: Coinage and Money in Thessalonike from the Thirteenth to the Fifteenth Century," *DOP* 57 (2003): 179–86, contrasts the treatment of the city and emperor on Michael's coinage to

the ruler-city configuration on Thessalonian coinage.

134 *DOC* 5.2: no. 1, departs from previous traditions by showing on its reverse the emperor not being crowned by the Virgin, who appears on the obverse enthroned, but rather being presented to Christ by his saintly namesake, the archangel Michael. This reverse imagery, then, continues on coinage struck in Constantinople. See also note 13 above.



FIG. 29 Gold *hyperpyron* of Michael VIII Palaiologos, Magnesia, pre-1261 (69.54) (photo: Dumbarton Oaks)

is shown simultaneously being blessed or sanctioned by a holy figure. On the silk, Michael's archangelic namesake embraces him and rests his hand intimately on his shoulder, and on the coin Christ touches his crown in a gesture that suggests divine approval. This distinction in imperial tenor—between the emphasis on coronation and legitimation of the coin versus the idiosyncratic scene of intercession on the silk—indicates the different audiences for each imperial image. While coinage is intended for a wide and anonymous audience, the silk, materially related to specie in diplomatic contexts, was designed with one particular foreign audience in mind.

Visualizing Largesse through Synkrisis

The addition of the contemporary imperial image, modeled primarily on scenes of intercession, complicates the formal design of the textile. Not only did it prompt a redistribution of the hagiographic sequencing (relegating the scene of Sixtus's burial to the lower level), but it also put into direct dialogue hagiographic and imperial narratives. Henry Maguire has emphasized that the rhetorical technique of comparison, or *synkrisis*, introduces "paradigmatic meanings into syntagmatically composed narratives."¹³⁵ Through visual juxtapositions and comparisons, he claims, higher levels of signifi-

cation are produced. According to rhetorical formulae for imperial encomia handed down from Menander Rhetor, a good emperor should be compared to noble figures such as David, Solomon, or Constantine and a bad emperor to Saul, Pharaoh, or Herod. Such rhetorical strategies abound in encomia, where the emperor's might typically surpasses that of Abaris, Gyges, and Kroises—and where his sins are forgiven like David's.¹³⁶ The art of comparison, Maguire argues, extended far beyond the literary genre of encomia and constituted integral mental equipment for any educated Byzantine. The visual arts in particular, he claims, became one of the main realms for comparison, where one of the most "distinctive characteristics" of Byzantine art was the topos of "compositionally balanced pairs that mirror each other either formally, or thematically, or both."¹³⁷ Comparison through formal mirroring occurs in the Genoese textile, where formal and thematic juxtapositions of praise and censure produce a commentary on imperial largesse.

135 H. Maguire, "The Art of Comparing in Byzantium," *ArtB* 70, no. 1 (1988): 88.

136 See Angelov, *Imperial Ideology* (n. 11 above), 87–88 for a compilation of figures to whom Michael VIII is compared in imperial panegyric. Significantly, Michael is lauded as the new Zorobabel for leading his people back to the New Jerusalem. See also P. Magdalino and R. S. Nelson, "The Emperor in Byzantine Art of the Twelfth Century," *ByzF* 8 (1982): 123–83, repr. in Magdalino, *Tradition and Transformation* (n. 11 above), article IV.

137 Maguire, "Art of Comparing," 89.

The central image of the Byzantine emperor Michael, led by the saint with the support of the archangel, is set in opposition to three other scenes (1, 9, and 16) of the ancient Roman emperor Decius. Titular distinctions serve to distance the contemporary from the historic ruler: both are described as emperors but the ancient ruler is called merely “Emperor Decius,” whereas more lengthy nomenclature designates the thirteenth-century emperor: *Altissimum Imperatorem Grecorum Dominum Michaellem Ducam Angelum Comnenum Paleologum*. The inscription specifies Michael explicitly as Greek Emperor (*Imperator Grecorum*). While this profound idiosyncrasy bears larger implications for the development of Byzantine imperial identity in exile, within the pictorial program of the textile such a distinction verbally underscores a relationship of opposition between the two imperial figures: the contemporary “Greek” emperor and the ancient (Roman) emperor. Beyond titular distinctions, a subtle costume motif further indicates that the two rulers on the textile correspond to each other, though separated in time, as models of good and bad rule. In the two scenes of confrontation between martyrs and the ancient ruler on the upper register (scenes 1 and 9), Decius wears a sharply pointed headdress whose shape is associated with contemporary Byzantine court costume. It is depicted on courtiers in a twelfth-century manuscript—on folios 2v and 1r of Vatican 1851—and it is also worn by Cyrenius in the Chora mosaics (fig. 26).¹³⁸ This headdress, possibly the *skiadion* described

by Pseudo-Kodinos, arches upward, forming a peaked projection in front.¹³⁹ The fact that it is the other emperor, the ancient Roman emperor, who is contemporized through dress suggests that he is to be read against, as a negative counterpart to, the only other contemporary imperial figure on the cloth, namely the Byzantine (“Greek”) emperor, Michael Palaiologos.

The rationale for Decius’s contemporary headdress has been explained by one scholar as a means of demoting the ancient Roman ruler: “. . . this hat of higher nobility and officialdom [was] more suitable than any crown for an emperor who was both heathen and tyrant.”¹⁴⁰ But contemporary sources suggest that the *skiadion* was not limited to officials but was also worn by the emperor himself—it was a more fluid element of court dress.¹⁴¹ Rather than fixing the station of the ancient ruler, the costume motif guides the viewer through the visual program and differentiates the two authority figures.¹⁴² The elaborate headdress exaggerates Decius’s position of authority and highlights his

dress in the later Byzantine period more generally, see the insightful article by M. G. Parani, “Cultural Identity and Dress: The Case of Late Byzantine Ceremonial Costume,” *JÖB* 59 (2007): 95–134.

139 Pseudo-Kodinos, *Traité des offices*, ed. J. Verpeaux (Paris 1966), 141–66, 180, 207, 227, 279. On the *skiadion*, see N. Ševčenko, “*Skiadion*,” *ODB* 3:1910, and M. Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images: Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th–15th Centuries)* (Leiden, 2003), 68–70 with a definition at 349. The headdress represented on the upper register of the textile is distinct from the sort of winged headgear often designating persecutors as in the mosaics of the Massacre of the Innocents at the Chora, a headgear studied by Ruth Mellinkoff in “Demonic Winged Headgear,” *Viator* 16 (1985): 367.

140 Johnstone, “Byzantine ‘Pallio’” (n. 5 above), 107. Johnstone compares Decius’s hat to contemporary dress represented at the Chora but does not identify the motif as either a *toupha* or a *skiadion*.

141 Parani points this out: *Reconstructing the Reality of Images*, 70. Again, Pseudo-Kodinos describes members of different rank, including the emperor, wearing this headdress.

142 As a comparative example, in the exonarthex frescoes of the Vatopedi monastery on Mount Athos, elaborate court headdresses also serve as visual clues of opposition. In order to draw a contrast between asceticism and gluttony, a lavish banquet attended by wealthy guests wearing a wide array of distinctive court headdress sits adjacent to the representation of the Heavenly Ladder of John Klimakos, which relates directly to monastic pursuits. S. Gerstel, “Civic and Monastic Influences on Church Decoration in Late Byzantine Thessalonike,” *DOP* 57 (2003): 234–35, notes the startling contrast “between the earnestly ascending monks and the banqueters” that illustrates the twentieth step of the ladder “on Alertness.”

138 On the Vatican manuscript, see n. 117 above. On court dress at the Chora, see P. Underwood, *The Kariye Djami* (New York, 1966), 1:42, and Nelson, “Taxation with Representation” (n. 125 above), 58–59. Paribeni, “Il *pallio* di San Lorenzo” (n. 5 above), 244 n. 44, and Falcone, “Il ‘Pallio’ bizantino” (n. 5 above), 347–48, refer to the headdress worn by Decius on the upper register of the textile in Genoa as a *toupha*. The *toupha* holds a privileged position in art historical literature on the lost equestrian statue of Justinian in the Augustaion. A drawing from the 1430s today in Budapest is generally thought to represent Justinian’s lost monument although various other proposals have been advanced. In one journal a lively debate about the drawing was instigated by P. Williams Lehmann, “Theodosius or Justinian? A Renaissance Drawing of a Byzantine Rider,” *ArtB* 41, no. 1 (1959): 39–57, who proposed that the drawing represented a lost gold medallion of Theodosius II. This claim was refuted by C. Mango, “Letters to the Editor,” *ArtB* 41, no. 4 (1959): 351–56, repr. in *Studies on Constantinople* (Aldershot–Brookfield, 1993), article X. Lehmann’s response was printed directly after Mango’s, 356–58, and Michael Vickers contributed to the debate in *ArtB* 58, no. 2 (1976): 281–82. For the ideological valences of court

role as a persecutor in contradistinction to Michael. On the upper register of the textile, Decius sits enthroned, hand raised in a gesture of command and speech, guarded by two armed soldiers (scenes one and nine). His portrayal is unmistakably—and stereotypically—confrontational,¹⁴³ whereas the Byzantine (“Greek”) emperor is depicted in a scene of union and affection, led toward the church by the saint, the archangel’s hand resting intimately on his shoulder. The arrangement of the ancient emperor follows well-established conventions for the persecutor while the configuration of the contemporary ruler innovatively draws on scenes of intercession and union. To reinforce this comparison, the artist has formally arranged the two scenes of Decius in this particular headgear to mirror each other at either edge of the upper register, thus framing the Palaiologan emperor, who appears in the privileged central space of the textile.¹⁴⁴ The design, in this sense, frames the example of good rule with that of bad rule: while Decius condemns martyrs to death, Michael not only brings peace but is invited to the sacred space of the church of Genoa, the focal point of the textile and its largest formal element. This concept of Michael as the exemplum of good rule is appropriate for the function of the cloth. For, unlike past persecutors, Michael is an ally; in the words of his encomiast Holobolos, he is Genoa’s “beloved” and his image will be her great *pharmakon*.

While the praiseworthy and blameworthy emperors are put into explicit visual *synkrisis* of opposition on the textile, the good Byzantine emperor is also implicitly compared to the sacred hagiographic figures. Michael is at once set against the tyrannical actions of Decius and set alongside saintly transaction and distribution. Although the iconographic cycle of Saint Lawrence was uncommon in Byzantium in the thirteenth century, it nevertheless presented the ideal

imagery for this diplomatic occasion: the identity of the saint relates to the church for which the silk was destined, and, moreover, the saint’s narrative is governed by exchange and transaction, central concerns of the treaty for which the silk was created. Juxtaposing saintly transaction with contemporary diplomacy, the imperial scene of union is surrounded by hagiographic episodes that emphasize the sale and distribution of wealth. The first scene on the upper register at the far left (the logical spatial beginning of the story) and the sixth scene (its narrative or temporal beginning) both refer to the selling of property. In scene six Lawrence is ordered to distribute the belongings of the church and in scene one he is confronted about that sale. In a total of five scenes on the top register, in fact, the inscription makes explicit references to the selling or distributing of property (scenes one, two, six, seven, and eight); and in all the other scenes, save the central scene on the top register, which evokes contemporary diplomacy, the sale is implied by virtue of its consequences. This is neither accidental nor merely conventional, I would argue, since there was no well-established Byzantine pictorial tradition for the story of Saint Lawrence. The textile’s visual program emphatically underscores the noble and pious transaction that was unjustly punished.

Furthermore, the seamless flow from the central imperial scene to the opening of the hagiographic narrative suggests that both emperor and saint participate in the same overarching plot of largesse. The Genoese church serves as the formal setting for two scenes: the symbolic entrance of the Byzantine emperor and also the backdrop for the opening scene of the hagiographic story where Sixtus, book in hand, gestures toward Lawrence with his command to distribute. Lawrence turns his head back to meet Sixtus’s gaze while his body faces forward toward the group of potential buyers.¹⁴⁵ He holds a chalice and censer in one hand and a paten in the other while the group of anonymous buyers are positioned with outstretched hands. The one closest to the saint touches the chalice base to suggest that the process of transaction is already underway. Immediately following, the figure of Lawrence is repeated (scene eight), his body and attention directed toward the mass of poor approaching with outstretched

143 These are the basic visual configurations for the confrontation between a martyr and Roman authority. The inscriptions too suggest a conventionality of the scenes involving Decius. In all three, the inscriptions simply label the Saint Xistus, Laurentius, or Ypolitus “disputans imperiatori Decio.”

144 It is significant as well that Decius does not wear the court headdress in the lower register, where his relation to Michael is not as direct. In the upper register, however, the two instances of such headgear physically point to the center, formally guiding the viewer’s eye. Cf. Paribeni, “Il *pallio* di San Lorenzo” (n. 5 above), 236, which notes inconsistencies in dress throughout the textile.

145 This posture echoes that of Lawrence in scene six, where he is turned toward the right, propelling the visual narrative, but his head turns back slightly toward the Byzantine emperor.

hands. Transaction gives way to distribution with this scene. The coin rather than the chalice constitutes the point of physical contact between the saint and the group: still in Lawrence's closed hand, it touches the first figure's open hand, into which it is on the verge of being deposited. The scenes on the upper right register visually create an analog of sale and of distribution where the recipients of both coin and church treasures (by both sale and donation) are put in parallel, and they culminate in a scene of condemnation and persecution. Then in the pendant position on the far left of the textile, a transformation of value ensues: the sold church property, already converted again into money for distribution, is transformed into the recipients themselves, loaded onto an ox-drawn cart for display before Decius. These scenes again result in punishment. Formally, therefore, the top register is divided into two narratives of sale and distribution both presided over by the "bad" emperor, and they are separated spatially and inaugurated by the central scene of the "good" emperor, sanctioned by Saint Lawrence and the archangel.

On a subtle rhetorical level, the textile provides a visual justification for Michael's diplomatic actions: in order to enter an alliance with the Genoese he offered on very liberal terms substantial commercial privileges in addition to silk and specie. Responding to the treaty's terms, Peter Schreiner notes: "Nel trattato del Ninfio Michele vendette un intero impero per niente."¹⁴⁶ As an appropriate comparative story, the life of Saint Lawrence's martyrdom concerns equitable and just distribution. To emphasize the actions of sale and distribution, the design adopts the format of continuous narration, where visual details are adumbrated rather than abbreviated to a single scene of martyrdom (as, for example, in the icon of Saint Lawrence in the Malcove collection; fig. 14). By selectively delineating and attenuating the specific episodes in the saint's life that relate to exchange or transaction, the silk ultimately becomes a visual encomium to the Byzantine emperor despite the fact that the intended recipients were Genoese. While the cloth addresses its intended Genoese audience with its iconography and Latin letters, the piece as a whole articulates Byzantine superiority through distinctly Byzantine rhetorical conventions such as *synkrisis*. Michael's actions are sanctioned by the saint

and archangel; he is beloved, pious, and powerful, while Decius is merely powerful. Decius persecutes those who distribute wealth while Michael, in the very act of giving the textile, demonstrates his generosity.

In sum, the designers of the textile embedded the imperial narrative within the hagiographic cycle so as to create through *synkrisis* a visual encomium of contemporary imperial largesse. The emperor is explicitly contrasted to Decius: through costume, titulature, and formal arrangement the praiseworthy contemporary Byzantine emperor is opposed to the blameworthy ancient ruler who persecutes noble transaction. At the same time, the emperor is also compared implicitly to the textile's saintly protagonists through generosity and just exchange. Titos Papamastorakis has noted the close correspondence between Michael VIII's panegyric and his visual representation at the monastery of the Mavriotissa near Kastoria, and has characterized the later as a "visual encomium."¹⁴⁷ Holobolos highlights textiles as visual encomia when he describes the revival of the ancient custom of presenting *peploi* woven with images of emperor's deeds from that year.¹⁴⁸ The silk in Genoa also celebrates the emperor's greatness, his generosity. Not only does it exhibit the same qualities expressed in panegyric, the textile in Genoa also employs rhetorical structures drawn from encomia.

Yet a fundamental difference exists between these verbal and visual encomia. Unlike the one composed for oral performance before the emperor and his court, the textile's tribute was destined for a foreign audience. Holobolos's speech is designed to praise Michael in front of the emperor himself, while the textile's message of imperial praise is directed toward the Genoese. This shift in audience raises the challenge of how to celebrate the emperor in a foreign land—and in a particularly delicate diplomatic context of potential Byzantine-Genoese amicitia against the pope and Latin empire of Constantinople.¹⁴⁹ The solution to

146 Schreiner, "Bisanzio e Genova" (n. 9 above), 136. See also Parma Armani, "Nuove indagini" (n. 5 above), 35–36.

147 T. Papamastorakis, "Ένα εικαστικό εγκώμιο του Μιχαήλ Η' Παλαιολόγου: Οι εξωτερικές τοιχογραφίες στο καθολικό της μονής της Μαυριώτισσας στην Καστοριά," *ΔΧΑΕ* 15 (1989–90): 221–38.

148 Macrides, "New Constantine" (n. 14 above), 28–30.

149 In the textile's concerted effort to differentiate between the two imperial figures, it is tempting to read another political message directed specifically toward the Genoese concerning their diplomatic involvement with the Byzantine emperor of the "Greeks" against the other contemporary emperor, the Latin emperor of Constantinople. The textile offers a message of pious transaction, sanctioned by a

this challenge hinges on the vocabulary of gift-giving and largesse, traditional attributes of the imperial ideal, but here subtly crafted to convey a sophisticated message of just and pious largesse without obvious triumphant overtones. Such an agenda governs the particular hagiographic and imperial arrangement and helps to explain why the emperor's effigy is so seamlessly integrated into the saintly cycle. Recall that there are no artificial divisions between the scenes and the figures are all depicted in comparable scale. Instead of traditional imagery of victory such as presiding over barbarian tribute bearers, immobile and majestic, or triumphantly astride a mount—as on such classic imperial monuments as the base of the obelisk of Theodosius or the Barberini ivory—Michael's sovereignty on the silk in Genoa is underscored through subtle rhetorical juxtapositions.

This more subtle visual logic is explained by its function as a diplomatic gift given to seal a pact that aimed at the restoration of Constantinople and the legitimation of Michael Palaiologos. The entire design of the silk, I have argued, articulates this diplomatic agenda. In much the same way, the lost textile given in conjunction with the Council of Lyons depicted a saintly sanctioned pictorialization of Byzantine-western allegiance. Both were extended as state gifts in moments of great diplomatic importance and uncertainty. They each relied on unconventional modes of imperial representation as visual solutions for praising the emperor in an urgent yet delicate diplomatic situation abroad.

The fact that Holobolos fails to mention the imperial effigy on the Saint Lawrence silk, such an important state gift, in the words of Macrides “is not surprising if one considers the position in which the emperor is represented.”¹⁵⁰ Holobolos could have said anything he wanted—ekphrasis was not bound by the rules of veracity.¹⁵¹ He chose not to mention the imperial

effigy because, Macrides explains, Byzantine-Genoese tides had turned by 1265, when the first of his imperial orations was delivered.¹⁵² The diplomatic gift and the imperial oration recording it belong to different worlds.

Rivalries: Nicaea and Epiros, Genoa and Venice

The silk was executed on the eve of the 1261 Byzantine restoration of Constantinople, a moment when the fate and future configuration of the empire were still very much uncertain. While the design does not represent the emperor as a supplicant in any overt sense—he does not perform proskynesis nor are there first-person petitions in the inscription—he is shown being led to the Genoese church by the wrist, a symbol of east-west allegiance sanctioned by the archangel. But by 1265, when Holobolos's first oration was delivered in Constantinople, the Genoese were no longer united with the Byzantines in enmity against the Venetians but rather were planning treason against Michael's restored Byzantine empire. Thus Holobolos not only omits the scene of Byzantino-Genoese *philia* in his oration but he also casts the exchange in such a way that the Byzantine emperor is the receiver of Genoese supplication. The ambassadors even claim to love being subject to Michael's right hand.¹⁵³ The idea that the Genoese requested the imperial image further underscores their position of subordination, and Holobolos speaks of the imperial image as a source of love and protection for their city, “which is both yours and ours.” Such a characterization of the Genoese ambassadors is appropriate to the context of the encomium's delivery before the undisputed emperor of Constantinople. The textile, however, depicts a very different emperor, one still in the process of achieving this singular imperial status. At the time of the textile's commission Michael was in residence in Nicaea eyeing rival

powerful sacro-imperial triumvirate—the leader of heavenly hosts, head of the Byzantine “Greek” empire in exile, and patron of Genoa's cathedral. Through the Treaty of Nymphaion, the Genoese entered into alliance (transaction) with the schismatic Greeks against the pope's candidate for the empire of Constantinople. The imagery, on some level, visually justifies this engagement.

150 Macrides, “New Constantine,” 35.

151 On ekphrasis, see H. Maguire, “Truth and Convention in Byzantine Descriptions of Works of Art,” *DOP* 74 (1974): 113–40; L. James and R. Webb, “To Understand Ultimate Things and to

Enter Secret Places’: Ekphrasis and Art in Byzantium,” *Art History* 14 (1991): 1–17; R. Webb, “Ekphrasis Ancient and Modern: The Invention of a Genre,” *Word and Image* 15 (1999): 7–18.

152 Macrides, “New Constantine,” 35, points out that the eagerness with which Holobolos portrays the Genoese desire for an image of the Byzantine emperor “comes at a time when Genoese-Greek relations were not good.”

153 Treu, *Orationes*, 1:46, and Siderides, “Μανουήλ Ὀλοβόλου,” 188.

claimants in Epiros, and he was still co-emperor with the legitimate heir to the Laskarid throne.

Given this context of uncertainty surrounding the textile's commission, it is tempting to look for deeper meaning in the Byzantine emperor's characterization as *Imperator Grecorum*. The idiosyncratic nature of this titulature has not gone unnoticed by scholars. Generally it is explained by the fact that the inscription itself, and all the silk's inscriptions, follow western embroidery techniques and were presumably executed by a western-trained artist. The explanation thus accounts for the title as merely a western convention: the Latin copy of the Treaty of Nymphaion, like other Latin documents of the time, describes the Byzantine emperor as the *Imperator Grecorum*.¹⁵⁴ This same designation on the textile may simply suggest that a Latin artist was responsible for the inscriptions and was adopting the Latin convention. Without denying this convention, I have attributed to the titulature a narrative function within the textile's overall design: to distance contemporary from ancient ruler as part of a larger logic of visual *synkrisis* entirely appropriate for a gift on the diplomatic occasion of the Treaty of Nymphaion. In closing, I would like to suggest, tentatively at least, a further possible significance to the Greekness of the emperor on the embroidered silk.

Regardless of western conventions, it is difficult to imagine that such an important state gift would include titulature, even in Latin, that was considered objectionable from the Byzantine perspective. Members of the court at Nicaea were not ignorant of Latin; in fact Holobolos took the study of Latin seriously and was actively engaged in translation activities.¹⁵⁵ Despite

our lack of knowledge about scriptoria and other artistic workshop practices in Nicaea, it is well known that scholarship flourished at the Laskarid court.¹⁵⁶ Undergirding the textile's design is a sophisticated rhetorical excursus on diplomacy, on transaction, and on imperial munificence. With the understanding of the textile as the culmination of imperial ideologies developed in Nicaea, Michael's characterization as *Imperator Grecorum* assumes additional significance.

Scholars have suggested that during the Nicene period the term "Hellene" came into use among Byzantine intellectuals as a synonym for "Roman." While its origins lie in the late twelfth century, as part of the burgeoning intolerance of foreigners at the late Komnenian court,¹⁵⁷ it intensified during the period of exile in tandem with the fragility of imperial authority. Anthony Kaldellis and Dimiter Angelov have cautioned against overemphasizing the impact of Hellenism on the imperial office—by no means did it supplant the predominant Byzantine sense of *Romanitas* even in exile—and yet with Patriarch Germanos II (1223–1240) and Michael's predecessor emperor Theodore II Laskaris (1254–1258) we see a concerted "ethnic Greek self-identification."¹⁵⁸ In official correspondence with western churchmen, for example, Germanos II used the term "Graikoi" to describe the "orthodox population within and outside the boundaries of the Nicene state," even referring explicitly to the "empire of the Greeks"

154 The Byzantine emperor is described as Greek numerous times in the treaty. See Manfroni, "Relazioni" (n. 23 above), 791–92, 795, 802. Cf. L. Pieralli, *La corrispondenza diplomatica dell'imperatore bizantino con le potenze estere nel tredicesimo secolo (1204–1282): Studio storico-diplomatico ed edizione critica* (Vatican City, 2006), 42–43, 116–18, 149.

155 At a very young age, Holobolos translated Boethius's *De topicis differentiis* and *De hypotheticis syllogismis*. See E. Fisher, "Planoudes, Holobolos, and the Motivation for Translation," *GRBS* 43 (2002): 77–104; eadem, "Manuel Holobolos, Alfred of Sareshal, and the Greek Translator of ps.-Aristotle's *De Plantis*," *Classica et mediaevalia* 57 (2006): 189–211; B. Bydén, "'Strangle Them with These Meshes of Syllogisms!': Latin Philosophy in Greek Translations of the Thirteenth Century," in *Interaction and Isolation in Late Byzantine Culture: Papers Read at a Colloquium Held at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, 1–5 December, 1999*, ed. J. O.

Rosenqvist (Stockholm–London–New York, 2004), 133–57, and Angelov, *Imperial Ideology* (n. 11 above), 67–70. See also n. 32 above on Holobolos.

156 This was an extremely learned court, as scholars such as Ahrweiler, Angold, Kaldellis, and Angelov have shown. It is clear that books abounded in Nicaea. See Constantines, *Higher Education in Byzantium* (n. 32 above), 5–27. Blemmydes traveled to Mount Athos and elsewhere to collect books. As noted by N. G. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium*, rev. ed. (London–Cambridge, 1996), 220, Theodore Laskaris had a personal copy of Aristotle's *Physics* (Ambr. M 46 sup.), and a note in the flyleaf suggests he read it from beginning to end. It remains unclear, however, what books, if any, were actually copied there. See Prato, "Produzione libraria" (n. 101 above), 72.

157 The first "unequivocal use of the term 'Hellene' to mean Byzantine" occurs in a letter written by George Tornikes to Manuel I Komnenos: Angold, *Church and Society* (n. 13 above), 512. See Magdalino, "Hellenism and Nationalism" (n. 11 above). See discussion below and n. 11 above.

158 Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 95.

(Βασιλεία τῶν Γραικῶν).¹⁵⁹ Greek identity—again as a pendant to Roman, not a replacement—became a means of distancing Nicenes from the Latins but also, perhaps surprisingly, from rival Greek successor claimants, especially in Epiros. For Akropolites, Nicaea was *Hellenis* (the ancient theme of Hellas), and the Pindos mountains separated “our Hellenic land” (τῆς Ἑλληνίδος καὶ ἡμετέρας γῆς) from Epiros.¹⁶⁰ With this in mind, the description of Michael Palaiologos as *Imperator Grecorum* on the textile sent to Genoa may bear larger implications for the construction of imperial identity in Nicaea. This is not to suggest that it was in any way common to refer to the emperor in such a manner—it is indeed to my knowledge a hapax. On the eve of the Byzantine restoration of Constantinople the designation is particularly significant because, as is well known, after Michael triumphantly entered the imperial city he was hailed as a new Constantine.¹⁶¹ Even in

a document from one year later in Genoa he is referred to as such.¹⁶² The textile thus evokes a moment before Michael was the new Constantine, when he lacked the legitimacy that Constantinople would later bestow on him and his line.

On the eve of this momentous change, the *greco-rum* of the inscription references a number of intellectual currents described by Michael Angold: it indicates a commitment to the preservation of Hellenic philosophy among the Nicene literati; it offers a new metaphor for exile, casting the Byzantines not only as the children of Israel but as the ancient Hellenes; and it further articulates an anti-Latin and simultaneously anti-Epirote stance.¹⁶³ The two rival successor states were both actively engaged in building networks of alliances with the goal of reclaiming Constantinople. Both Epiros and Nicaea by the mid-thirteenth century claimed imperial and ecumenical sovereignty (i.e., both had a Byzantine emperor and patriarch). For Epiros too a diplomatic silk survives, the one associated with the 1210 *promissio* between Epiros and Venice (fig. 3). While admittedly it differs from the silk in Genoa in that nothing in its design caters to its particular circumstance, it testifies to many of the same aspirations. Although the Epirote faction was defeated at the battle of Pelagonia in 1259, as noted above, Epiros remained a very real threat to Michael’s empire in Nicaea. After the unsuccessful siege of Galata, it became clear that Michael would need overseas help in order to claim

159 Idem, “Byzantine Ideological Reactions” (n. 10 above), 301; idem, *Imperial Ideology*, 95; and Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium* (n. 11 above), 353–54. In Germanos’s use of the term “Graikoi,” Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 96, writes, he found a “religio-ethnic self-signifier applicable to the context of antagonism towards the schismatic Latins.”

160 *Georgii Akropolitae Opera* (Leipzig, 1903), 166.7; Macrides, *George Akropolites* (n. 14 above), 356–58; and Angold, “Byzantine ‘Nationalism’” (n. 11 above), 64. Angold, *ibid.*, 68, writes: “With the fall of Constantinople the precise meaning of Roman was in doubt and Hellene gave Roman identity a more precise cultural, linguistic, and racial context.” See Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 345–88. Angelov, “Byzantine Ideological Reactions,” 301–3, considers the different semantic trajectories of the terms Γραικοί and Ἕλληνες, the former as religio-ethnic primarily and the later linked with secular antique associations. See also Page, *Being Byzantine* (n. 11 above), 94–129.

161 Macrides, “New Constantine,” as well as eadem, “From the Komnenoi to the Palaiologoi: Imperial Models in Decline and Exile,” in *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th–13th Centuries; Papers from the Twenty-Sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, St. Andrews, March 1992*, ed. P. Magdalino (Aldershot–Brookfield, 1994), 269–82. See also M. Gallina, “Novus Constantinus—Νέος Κωνσταντίνος: Temi di memoria costantiniana nella propaganda imperiale a Bisanzio,” *Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia* 27 (1994): 33–56, esp. 53–55. The New Constantine epithet is found on documents as well as major artistic programs and on the textile installed in Hagia Sophia, which was later changed (as in n. 69 above). Significantly, Michael is also described as Πῶμης ἀναξ in inscriptions in southern Greece at Kythera and Mani, on which see V. Foskolou, “In the Reign of the Emperor of Rome. . . : Donor Inscriptions and Political Ideology in the Time of Michael VIII Paleologos,” *ΔΧΑΕ* 27 (2006): 455–61. See also V. Đurić, “Le nouveau Constantin dans l’art serbe medieval,”

in *Αἰθέρων: Studien zur byzantinischen Kunst und Geschichte; Festschrift für Marcell Restle*, ed. B. Borkopp and T. Steppan (Stuttgart, 2000), 54–65.

162 In this 1262 document published by L. T. Belgrano, “Cinque documenti Genovesi-Orientali,” *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* 17 (1885): 227, the Byzantine emperor is described both as a new Constantine and as Greek Emperor: “Michael in Christo Deo fidelis imperator et moderator grecorum a Deo coronatus semper Augustus, Ducas, Angelus, Comnians, Paleologus et novus Constantinus. . . .” Another document in Genoa from about 1280 describes him merely as Roman emperor without reference to Greece or to Constantine: “Michael in Christo Deo fidelis imperator et moderator romeorum, Ducas, Angelus, Comninus, Paleologus semper Augustus” (236). In contrasting imperial ideology between Nicaea post-1204 and Constantinople post-1261, Angelov, “Byzantine Ideological Reactions,” 306, points out that Hellenic discourse did continue with the early Palaiologoi—Holobolos even described the Orthodox as Graikoi in an official letter of Michael VIII to Clement IV in late 1266 or 1267—but figured less prominently than before in Nicaea.

163 Angold, “Byzantine ‘Nationalism,’” 62–70.

Constantinople before Epiros did. At the same moment Genoa, after suffering a defeat by the Venetians at Acre (1258), was looking for more profitable trade networks. The coincidence of the Nicene victory at the Battle of Pelagonia and the Genoese defeat at the Battle of Acre set the stage for the Treaty of Nymphaion. Against this backdrop, the use of *grecoorum* in the emperor's titulature may suggest more than evidence of western conventions or artists—it serves as a means of differentiating Nicaea from Epiros. This, paired with the distancing of the contemporary Byzantine emperor from the ancient Roman ruler, suggests a sophisticated design that interweaves contemporary rivalries—rivalries involving maritime trading privileges (Genoa and Venice) and the legitimate succession of Byzantine imperial power (Nicaea and Epiros).

Within the context of these rivalries, the imagery of the silk portrays union, but a close reading of the relationship between hagiographic and imperial scenes reveals an underlying message of Byzantine superiority. The silk's design does not blur boundaries but rather inscribes difference. In this sense it does not fit well with the thirteenth-century syncretic arts of the eastern Mediterranean in which it has been placed by Belting and subsequent scholars. While it includes western and eastern motifs and techniques—and depicts a symbolic scene of Byzantine-Genoese union at its center—it is governed ultimately by an overarching ideology of difference and Byzantine superiority.¹⁶⁴ It is thus well situated within the cultural context of Nicaea, which was conceptualized as an empire in exile, whose Greek emperor had his eye on the prize of Constantinople.



164 A similar argument about visual hierarchy with regard to the formal arrangement of the Byzantine enamels of the Royal Crown of Hungary has been made by C. J. Hilsdale, "The Social Life of the Byzantine Gift: The Royal Crown of Hungary Re-Invented," *Art History* 31, no. 5 (2008): 602–31. Other textiles such as the so-called Grandson Antependium or the textile of Giovanni Conti recently studied by Michele Bacci better exemplify the *lingua franca* model. See M. Bacci, "Tra Pisa e Cipro: La committenza artistica di Giovanni Conti (+1332)," *Annali della scuola normale superiore di Pisa*, ser. 4, 2 (2000): 343–86, and M. Martiniani-Reber, "An Exceptional Piece of Embroidery Held in Switzerland: The Grandson Antependium," in *From Aphrodite to Melusine: Reflections on the Archaeology and the History of Cyprus*, ed. M. Campagnolo and eadem (Geneva, 2007), 85–89 (with earlier bibliography).

The silk in Genoa holds a privileged position in the trajectory of early Palaiologan art as the very first image of Michael VIII and the first undeniably Palaiologan work of art. At the same time, it marks the culmination of Laskarid artistic traditions, about which we know little outside the realm of architecture.¹⁶⁵ None of the manuscripts that were once attributed to Nicaea can be substantiated as such at present: Hugo Buchthal attempted to reassign a number of manuscripts to Nicaea, a subgroup of the decorative style, but many questions remain unanswered.¹⁶⁶ This ambiguity stands in sharp contrast to the campaign of monumental building and decoration in Constantinople inaugurated by Michael's restoration of the imperial city and the early Palaiologan "circa 1300" school of manuscript painting. The textile in Genoa partially fills this lacuna by offering a glimpse into Nicaean visual culture on the eve of the reconquest of Constantinople. With a profusion of literary works and an apparent absence of arts securely dated and localized to Nicaea, scholars have based their interpretations of the empire in exile largely on the textual tradition. The Byzantine silk in Genoa, however, demonstrates that sophisticated and polemical rhetoric found expression in the visual arts as well.

Study of the silk in Genoa also prompts a reconsideration of the arts of Byzantium in relation to Genoa and Venice and the Byzantine cultural legacy cultivated by each of the rival maritime republics. As competition and rivalry surround the creation of the textile and the treaty by which it was given, it is instructive to consider its reception in Genoa in comparison to the Pala d'Oro in Venice (figs. 30 and 23). Leslie Brubaker has astutely commented that movement changes the meaning of an object.¹⁶⁷ Both the mode of transfer and the reception of these two Byzantine sumptuous objects in Italy speak to a very different sense of "Byzantinism" in Venice and in Genoa.¹⁶⁸ Both highly luxurious

165 On Laskarid architecture, see n. 115 above.

166 Buchthal, "Studies in Byzantine Illumination" (n. 101 above), 94, acknowledged the ambiguity of the attribution: "In all probability this attribution will be received rather un-enthusiastically by most historians of Byzantine art."

167 Brubaker, "Elephant and the Ark" (n. 1 above), 175–95. Philip Buc's "Conversion of Objects," *Viator* 28 (1997): 99–143, is instructive with regard to shifts in power triggered by the reconfigurations of objects.

168 Di Fabio, "Bisanzio a Genova fra XII e XIV secolo," 41, cautions against over-relying on the rivalry with Venice to explain the



FIG. 30 Pala d'Oro, San Marco, Venice (photo: Cameraphoto Arte, Venice/Art Resource, NY)

artifacts testify to each Italian maritime community's achievements in the eastern Mediterranean and to each city's political engagement with the eastern empire. The textile arrived in Genoa as a gift resulting from diplomatic negotiations aimed at ending what was

entirety of Genoa's complicated relationship with Byzantium. The contrast with the Pala d'Oro is introduced here in part to acknowledge the different "Byzantinisms" at play for Genoa and Venice. The literature on Venice and Genoa is vast. See the relatively recent historical essays in *Genova, Venezia, il Levante nei secoli XII–XIV: Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi, Genova-Venezia, 10–14 marzo 2000*, ed. G. Ortalli and D. Puncuh (Venice, 2001), and the art historical studies in *San Marco, Byzantium, and the Myths of Venice*, ed. H. Maguire and R. S. Nelson (Washington, DC, 2010). See in particular M. Jacoff, "Fashioning the Façade: The Construction of Venetian Identity on the Exterior of San Marco," 139–41 on the relationship between the roughly contemporaneous monumental facades of San Marco in Venice and San Lorenzo in Genoa.

perceived to be Venice's dominance of Constantinople and eastern Mediterranean trade. Conversely, Venice's Pala d'Oro constitutes an assemblage of spoliated and reconfigured enamels from Constantinople. Through complicated renovation campaigns, Venice's own history is inscribed into the sumptuous piece, where portraits of a Byzantine empress and the haloed figure of a Venetian Doge accompany plaques from the monastery of Christ Pantokrator in Constantinople.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, this reconstituted altar is displayed at the center of the church of San Marco, whose plan was modeled on the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople. The monument and its architectural frame together testify to Venice's long relationship to Byzantium, initially emulating the great eastern empire and later exploiting it.¹⁷⁰

The textile in Genoa, on the other hand, signals a different relationship with Byzantium. On a basic material level, it is not gold but silk, a product whose particular associations for Genoa were profound, since much of the commune's wealth was accrued through exporting alum dyes. Moreover it was not later altered to incorporate local magnates into its program. In Genoa the *pallio* is mentioned in the earliest inventory of the treasury of the cathedral of San Lorenzo in 1386, over a century after the Treaty of Nymphaion.¹⁷¹ By

169 D. Buckton and J. Osborne, "The Enamel of Doge Ordelaaffo Falier on the *Pala d'Oro* in Venice," *Gesta* 39, no. 1 (2000): 43–49, and Holger Klein, "Refashioning Byzantium in Venice, ca. 1200–1400," in Maguire and Nelson, *San Marco*, 193–225 (with bibliography).

170 On the ideological issues surrounding Byzantine art in Venice after 1204 see M. Georgopoulou, "Late Medieval Crete and Venice: An Appropriation of Byzantine Heritage," *ArtB* 77, no. 3 (1995): 479–96; R. S. Nelson, "High Justice: Venice, San Marco, and the Spoils of 1204," in *Byzantine Art in the Aftermath of the Fourth Crusade*, ed. P. L. Vocotopoulos (Athens, 2007), 143–51; F. W. Deichmann, "I pilastri acritani," *Rendiconti Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia* 50 (1980): 75–89, repr. in *Rom, Ravenna, Konstantinopel, Naher Osten: Gesammelte Studien zur spätantiken Architektur, Kunst und Geschichte* (Wiesbaden, 1982), article XXIX; M. Perry, "Saint Mark's Trophies: Legend, Superstition, and Archaeology in Renaissance Venice," *JWarb* 40 (1977): 27–49; and R. S. Nelson, "The History of Legends and the Legends of History: The Pilastri Acritani in Venice," in Maguire and Nelson, *San Marco*, 63–90.

171 The inventory contents can be found in Parma Armani, "Nuove indagini" (n. 5 above), 40–41. The inventory does not make reference to the second Byzantine silk mentioned by Holobolos, which, he claims, bore the emperor's portrait. This omission suggests to Di Fabio, "Un dono di stato: il pallio del 1261," in *La Cattedrale*

the mid-seventeenth century the *pallio* was removed from San Lorenzo and placed on public display.¹⁷² No surviving sources document the selection process for the textile's relocation to suggest why the *pallio* and not the other objects from the treasury were moved. A stone plaque engraved with the date of 1663, installed alongside the textile in the Magistrato dei Padri del Comune in the early nineteenth century, may clarify the rationale slightly. The text of this plaque celebrates the rediscovery of Genoa's rich history embodied in the textile, "which had been obscured by the deterioration of so many centuries and . . . dishonored by the darkness

di Genova, 201, that it had been destroyed or forgotten by this time, or at least stored in a different place and hence excluded from the treasury inventory. A third Byzantine silk is mentioned in the 1386 inventory, which has been identified as an *epitaphios* by Di Fabio, "Dono di stato," 201 and "Bisanzio a Genova fra XII e XIV secolo," 47–48. It is unclear how this no longer extant *epitaphios* arrived in Genoa—it could have been brought by Genoese merchants returning from the eastern Mediterranean or by one of the many Byzantine ambassadors in Genoa under Andronikos II. For an overview of the contents of the treasury of San Lorenzo, see Di Fabio, "Ornamentum, ministerium e valenza civica: Il tesoro della Cattedrale fra XII e XIII secolo," in *La Cattedrale di Genova*, 188–91. While not filled with a staggering amount of Constantinopolitan *ars sacra* like San Marco in Venice, San Lorenzo's treasury still includes a number of significant Byzantine objects, including the Zaccaria Cross, on which see A. Guillou, *Recueil des inscriptions grecques medievales d'Italie* (Rome, 1996), 24–27; S. G. Mercati, "Sulla croce bizantina degli Zaccaria nel Tesoro del Duomo di Genova," in idem, *Collectanea Byzantina*, 2 vols. (Bari, 1970), 2:520–33. Also in Genoa, though not in the Treasury of San Lorenzo, is the famous Sacro Volto, which has received much recent scholarly attention with the publication of G. Wolf, C. Bozzo Dufour, and A. R. Calderoni Masetti, eds., *Mandylyon: Intorno al Sacro Volto, Da Bisanzio a Genova* (Milan, 2004), and eidem, *Intorno al Sacro Volto* (above, n. 116). Di Fabio has also studied the no longer extant Byzantine (and Byzantinizing) art in Genoa in "Bisanzio a Genova fra XII e XIV secolo," 41–67.

172 On the reconfiguration of Genoa in this period, see G. L. Gorse, "A Classical Stage for the Old Nobility: The Strada Nuova and Sixteenth-Century Genoa," *ArtB* 79 (1997): 301–27. Notions of display and theatricality play a major component in the ideology of the urban reorganization of the city.

of concealment."¹⁷³ This renewed appreciation of the *pallio* parallels a shifting sense of Genoese civic identity that values the textile as a witness of Genoa's greatness in the eastern Mediterranean, a greatness recognized by the eastern empire. Its value derives from its status as a document of the commune's historic glories: as a gift from Byzantium the *pallio* keeps alive the imperial voice of its sender, even though by this time the Byzantine empire was but a distant memory.

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173 For the text of the plaque, which still survives in storage at the Museo Sant'Agostino (MSA 2346), see G. Serra, "Intorno ad un pallio portato da Costantinopoli a Genova nel secolo XIII," in *Della vita e delle opere del Marchese Gerolamo Serra*, ed. L. T. Belgrano (Genoa, 1859), 129. This plaque mistakenly identified the *pallio* as a gift from two separate Byzantine emperors. Serra was the first to write extensively about the *pallio* and he misidentified the central imperial figure as female, as the empress Theodora (he hypothesized that the *pallio* commemorated a visit made by Michael VIII and Theodora to the Genoese church in Pera-Galata in 1267). Despite the many misunderstandings in the *pallio*'s early history, M.G. Canale, *Discorso intorno al pallio di seta* (Genoa, 1857), associated its exchange with the Treaty of Nymphaion. Alizeri, in his *Guida* of the same year, claimed that the *pallio* was commissioned by the Genoese colony of Pera-Galata and arrived in Genoa only at the time of the Turkic conquest, when many other objects came to San Lorenzo: *Notizie dei Professori del Disegno in Liguria dalle Origine al secolo VI* (Genoa, 1870), 21–27. In 1846 the textile was located in the Palazzo Ducale, and in 1950 it was transferred to the Palazzo Bianco, where it remained until recently. Again, upon completion of a conservation campaign in Florence, it will be installed in the Museo di Sant'Agostino.